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FEMALE STABILITY:

OR, THE

H I S T O R Y

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MISS BELVILLE.

VOLUME V.
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REMADE STABILITY:

OF THE

NEW YORK

OF

REMADE STABILITY

VOLUME 7

FEMALE STABILITY:

OR, THE

H I S T O R Y

O F

MISS BELVILLE.

I N A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY THE LATE

MISS PALMER.

V O L. V.

L O N D O N :

Printed for F. NEWBERRY, the Corner of
St. Paul's Church-Yard.

M.DCC.LXXX.

FEMALE STABILITY

HISTORICAL

MISS BELVILLE



MISS BELVILLE

VOL. V.

LONDON

Printed by R. Newbery, at the Corner of
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FEMALE STABILITY:

OR, THE

HISTORY of *Miss* BELVILLE.

Miss DUNCANNON to *Lady* THOMPSON.

Nut-hill.

I Shall not have many letters to write from this place, my dear *Lady* Thompson, as *Admiral* Harrison is now no more; but I promised to be particular, and will perform my engagement. Yesterday I got to this place before dinner. I found *Adeline* in perfect health; she expressed great pleasure at the sight of me. I enquired how her uncle did: "Alas, my dear *Charlotte*, said she, he lives, and that is all; I have just left him in a little slumber; I fear his time of staying here is now very short." She wiped her eyes and looked out of the window. I said every thing I could to abate her

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concern. When I had done speaking, she answered with the most steady composure; "It is not the fear of death, Miss Duncannon, nor what may come after it, that causes these tears; nature bids them flow for a fellow-creature who is racked with the most agonizing tortures. Would it please heaven to release the Admiral, I might at first shed a few tears, the tribute of humanity, but in my heart I should not mourn. When I was much younger, and had familiarized my ideas to happiness, I learned the hard lesson of resignation, and I should blush if I had profited so little by my former misfortunes, as not to behold the approaching scene with some steadiness of mind. Be not uneasy, lest this parting should affect my health: (I had hinted such a fear) no, Charlotte, I have survived the greatest of misfortunes, and heaven will not suffer me to sink beneath this; perhaps this is meant as a *memento* of my speedy departure." "Bless me, Adeline, interrupted I, why do you give way to such melancholy ideas! you ought to banish them entirely from your mind. "Ah, Charlotte, answered she, call you those ideas melancholy? how different your sentiments and mine on this head! I should regard my summons hence as a felicity: believe me, 'till I am released I expect no happiness; some comfort I may experience in this state of probation,

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probation, but when this life is passed, all will be joy for ever. I have said thus much, Miss Duncannon, to quiet your apprehensions for what I may suffer on this occasion; I must feel while I am actuated by human passions, but I hope reason will moderate every sigh, and not suffer me to offend the great Disposer of the world by unavailing lamentations." Before I could answer, Captain Thunder came into the room in great distress. Adeline enquired after the Admiral: "Ah, madam, answered he, if you wish to see him alive, you must come directly; he is sinking apace; I would give all I have in the world to save him." We followed the Captain, who continued to vent his complaints 'till he came to the sick chamber; then he was silent. We found the poor Admiral hardly able to contend with his disorder. At the sight of his niece his emotions were very strong; he grasped her hand with tender violence, while the tears streamed down his face. Adeline appeared infinitely afflicted, and we all continued silent for some minutes. My friend first recovered herself, and addressed him in the most pathetic, yet firm tone of voice: "the condition to which you are reduced, my dear sir, said she, pains me to the soul, and I would willingly forfeit every temporal happiness to relieve you from the dominion of pain; but when we reflect

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that through this medium only we pass to perfect happiness, the momentary sufferings of the body appear nothing on comparison with the eternity of ease that is purchased by them. If it should please our benign Creator to afflict us at this time with your loss, it will be to translate you from a world of woe to one of unalloyed felicity. Consider, my dear sir, it is the hand of your Creator which oppresses you, whose power could in a moment banish the agony that now rends your limbs."—

"Ah, Adeline, answered he in a faint voice, I have not sufficiently considered these things; I hope for happiness, for I have not been a bad man; but many omissions may be laid to my charge." "We have all sins of this nature to answer for, replied Miss Belville, but thro' the mercy of him who died for us, I hope we shall be pardoned: they who believe on him, have nothing to fear from death." "Ay, my dear, returned the Admiral, 'tis on that I depend for happiness; you are an excellent young creature, heaven, bless you! and you too, madam, turning to me: make but this good girl your pattern, and she will lead you to heaven." A violent fit of pain came on and prevented his saying more. We were both affected; indeed I thought this the last struggle of oppressed nature, but it did not prove so. After some time he again was easy, and spoke with

with more freedom. "My dear niece, said he, you will be entirely mistress of my fortune; all I have left from you is a small estate and a little money, which I have given to Captain Thunder. I need not tell you to make a good use of it, your own heart will best direct you; may you be as happy as you deserve!" He wiped his eyes and was silent. Adeline could not command her voice to thank him for some minutes. At length, "your goodness, sir, said she, distresses me infinitely; I wish you had only left me part of your fortune, I have enough already; perhaps you might have bestowed it on some of your friends who wanted it." "Say not a word of that, Adeline, I charge you, answered he; I would not have been disappointed in this for the world; I always intended to give my fortune to my sister, had she lived; and now she is gone, who has a right to it but her daughter? I was glad, on one account, that your father's estate went from you, as it gave me an opportunity of shewing the regard I had for your dear mother by providing for you. Had I a million of money, you should have it all." "Ah, sir, said she, kissing his hand and weeping, I have not words to thank you!" "Don't cry, Adeline, replied the Admiral sobbing, I cannot bear to see your tears; I must leave you, my child, I feel I am dying; therefore, once more, God bless

bless you!" The pain prevented his saying more. Again he recovered, and took the most affecting leave both of his niece and me. When the Captain came to him, "Ah, Jack, said he, at last I am foundered; farewell; remember the man who has often fought by you." The Captain wrung his hand in the most violent emotion: "if I forget you, Admiral, said he, may I be posted for a coward; dam'me, this is worse than being taken by the French; this will certainly break my heart!" The tears rolled down his face, and he remained speechless through grief. The pain now returned with added violence; oh, Lady Thompson, his agonies are not to be describ'd. During this severe fit Miss Belville spoke to the Admiral several times, but he could not answer her. The physician whispered me he was in the agonies of death, and his niece had better retire. Adeline heard what he said, and turned towards him: "it is well, sir, said she, we will not disturb him in his last moments." She knelt a moment by him, and kissed his cold hand, already clammy with death; then throwing her handkerchief over her face, hastily left the room. I would have prevailed on the Captain to do the same, but in vain; he refused to stir from the bed-side. Finding he was not to be moved, I followed my friend, and left a sight shocking to humanity.

nity. I found her in her own chamber on her knees. I set down 'till she arose, which was in ten minutes. We continued silent about an hour, when a servant came and told us the Admiral was dead. "Thank God, he is released from this world of woe!" said Miss Belville, at the same time the tears streaming down her face. I could not comfort her, so much was I affected. She soon recovered herself, and sought to banish my concern: "I fear, Miss Duncannon, said she, the scene you have been present at will hurt your spirits; it is certainly very shocking to those who have not been accustomed to behold the havock made by death; I have been long used to see him approach those as dear to me as myself. (A sigh of anguish accompanied these words)—Yet, continued she, in a more composed voice, I am concerned for the effect this melancholy scene may have on you, it must appear in a terrible light to you; yet, my Charlotte, it is what we must all come to; and if we would familiarize it to our imaginations, it would lose half its horrors." She then proposed we should seek the Captain, and try to give him consolation. I begged she would excuse me a moment, which she readily did, and went by herself. Indeed I was never so deeply affected in my life; I think I shall never be gay again.

The

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The whole house is full of lamentation. None but Adeline appears to have the least reflection; she preserves the same charming composure which she is distinguished for.

Adieu, my dear Lady Thompson; you shall hear from me soon again, 'till which time I am, with compliments to Mrs. Abinton and Sir James, your very sincerely affectionate

CHARLOTTE DUNCANNON.

Miss DUNCANNON to Lady THOMPSON.

Nut-hill.

I Should not have let a week pass without writing to your ladyship, had my spirits been in tolerable order, but they were so greatly depressed, I could not bear to write down my melancholy ideas, nor indeed are they now much better; but fearful lest you should be uneasy, I take up my pen, though I have nothing but mournful circumstances to relate. Yesterday the remains of Admiral Harrison were interred in the family vault. Miss Bellville herself attended the funeral, which was followed by the tears and lamentations of the whole village; the Admiral did a great deal of good amongst the poor, and was much beloved. I would have gone with Adeline, but I was not well. Captain Thunder attended, and declared to me he never beheld any thing like

the behaviour of Miss Belville; she saw her uncle deposited in the vault, just in the place he had ordered; he had left particular directions, and she fulfilled the most minute injunction. This morning the will was read: he has left the whole of his immense fortune to her, except a legacy to Captain Thunder; the house, furniture, jewels and plate, are all Miss Belville's. We propose returning to London in a few days; Captain Thunder leaves us to-morrow. Adeline offered him to continue in the house, but he said he could not bear to stay in a place where his happiest days had been spent, "for dam'me, ladies, said he, if I would give a rope's end for life now he is gone. I would go immediately to sea, but that will only remind me more of poor Harrison; I will be hanged if I know what to do: however, Miss Belville, be where I will, I shall ever remember your kindness both to my departed friend and myself."

"Nor will your friendship for the Admiral be forgot by me, Captain Thunder, returned she; if you will now and then favour me with a visit, I shall be happy to see you. I am sorry you will not accept the use of this house, as I have another which I seldom am at, therefore it would not have been the least inconvenience to me; but the reason you urge is sufficient, and I will say no more of it: to hear of your
welfare

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welfare will always give me a sensible pleasure." He thanked her sincerely, though in his plain honest way. To confess the truth, Lady Thompson, I believe the Captain is a little touched with the beauty of Miss Belville; he told me he never thought to see so lovely a lady; but if it is so, he will only share the fate of others. Adeline has not discharged one of her uncle's servants, but retains them all in their several places. An old man who was his steward, she has invested with discretionary power to distribute clothes and money to the poor people, and with me went this morning to assure them they should not miss the Admiral's bounty. This has inspired the face of the village with cheerfulness, and go where you will, nothing is heard but praises of this excellent young lady. Never did I behold such uniform conduct; her large fortune is a real blessing to others. Wherever she goes, joy attends her footsteps, yet is her own heart the residence of sorrow, though she does not repine nor appear discontented. She often mentions the peculiar goodness of providence in blessing her with so large a fortune, and says, with her present comforts she ought to forget her former misfortunes. Oh, Lady Thompson, the character of this inimitable woman rises upon me each hour how very inferior

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ferior I am! but who is her equal? the being lives not. She bids me say she will write immediately on her arrival in London, and joins in love your very affectionate

CHARLOTTE DUNCANNON.

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Portman-square.

TO ease the anxiety of my Harriet, I take up my pen to inform her I am well, and safe in London, as the date of this letter declares. I left Nut-hill with little reluctance, as the mournful scene I was there present at made it far from agreeable; yet it was some alleviation to find the Admiral universally esteemed, and his loss as generally lamented: from every mouth I heard his praises; his charity and goodness was the theme of the whole village. I made it my business to relieve the hearts of those his death had oppressed, and assured them, as long as they continued to preserve the good character I heard of them, they should want for nothing in my power to supply them with. I have appointed proper persons to inspect their conduct, and give them every necessary comfort and assistance. I flatter myself, by strictly following the plan I have laid down, I shall not only make them happy in

their worldly concerns; but reform what is wrong in their morals. I have ever employed a great part of my fortune to the benefit of others; this capital encrease makes it necessary to enlarge my plan of benevolence. I am fully sensible of heaven's goodness in allotting me so large a portion of this world's wealth, and hope by my conduct to prove it. This addition of fortune gives me no pleasure but as it may prove of service to those who want it. It pleased the Almighty to give me this profusion of riches, at the same time he thought fit to take from me my greatest earthly happiness, perhaps to enable my mind to bear this flood of prosperity. It lost all taste for worldly happiness in losing Mr. Grenville; but I did not mean to get on this subject: excuse me, Harriet, my mind is melancholy. I am greatly indebted to the friendship of Miss Duncannon; her presence was a solace to the uneasiness I could not help feeling for one who had done so much for me. I wish it may not be too much for her spirits; she has been very grave ever since, and frequently mentions the shock it gave her. The natural gaiety of Charlotte's disposition never suffered her to think seriously on the solemnity of a death-bed scene, therefore she had no idea of it. It may be a means of making her reflect on the brevity and fleeting enjoyments of this life, and induce her to
treat

treat the deserving Medway as she ought: setting aside her behaviour to him, she is truly amiable, humane, tender and good-natured. This instance of her kindness has infinitely endeared her to me. I find I am likewise indebted to you for it, but instances of such considerate affection are common in my Harriet, and therefore surprizes me not. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward came to attend us to town; they both behaved with their usual politeness and partial attention to me. I was happy to see them, especially the Earl: his joy on my telling him so, exceeded all bounds. Mr. and Mrs. Evelin received me with great affection, condoled with me on my loss, and congratulated me on my fortune. They would have persuaded Charlotte and the gentleman to stay, but as Miss Duncannon wished to see her mother, she declined it. My Lord and Sir Edward attended her home. When they were gone, Mrs. Evelin gave me a letter from Lord Bromfield: it was filled with contrition for his past life, and resolutions of making all the atonement in his power for his former ill conduct; he lamented his matchless brother, as he called him, in the most pathetic terms: the horrors of his crime, he said, never appeared to him in the light it now did, and that nothing could make him endure life but my forgiveness, and the hopes of reconciling

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ciling himself to heaven by the sincerity of his repentance. He concludes with earnestly intreating me to favour him with a speedy answer that may relieve his mind, for he is absolutely miserable. By the date of this letter I found it had been wrote a week ; therefore, fatigued as I was, I would not defer writing 'till the next morning, but retired early to my chamber, and answered his epistle with all the tenderness I could ; assured him of my entire forgiveness, and begged, as he valued my repose, he would endeavour to restore his mind to tranquillity. Every argument I could think of I used, to prove it was his duty to do so ; I hope my letter will have the desired effect. I do really believe his repentance sincere, and all that can be done to make him happy he is intitled to. His letter, and the thoughts it occasioned, kept me waking ; and I am ashamed to tell my Harriet, greatest part of the night was spent in tears. Amid all my sorrows, the idea of your happiness gave me comfort. How often did I thank heaven who had given you to the man you loved ! Miserable as I am myself, the felicity of my friends occasions me real satisfaction. This morning Sir Harry Evelin sent to enquire after my health, and if I was disengaged he would wait on me. I expect him, and must bid you adieu to prepare for his reception. Let me hear from

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from you soon; I am anxious to know how things move on in your part of the world. Forget not my tenderest regards to Mr. Mortimer and your mother: tell the latter I rejoice sincerely in her recovery. Farewel, my beloved Lady Thompson: may nothing happen to disturb the domestic harmony you at present enjoy, prays from her heart your affectionate

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Lady THOMPSON to Miss BELVILLE.

Elmwood.

I Thank you for your last letter, my ever dear Adeline, which gave me the most heartfelt pleasure, as it contained assurances of your health, which I feared might be impaired by the late shock of your spirits. Your assurances to the contrary, and my mother's perfect recovery, has made me quite happy again, which a few days ago was far from the case; though in justice to the tenderness of Sir James, I put on a countenance of tolerable cheerfulness, but it was foreign to my heart. I knew the friend I best loved, the companion of my infant hours, was in a disagreeable situation, and I could not be easy. Your letter has removed my fears, and I once more behold every thing with pleasure. Ah, my Adeline, how uniform, how just is your conduct in all
situ-

situations! I blush for my want of fortitude when I contemplate your's; even in the most trying circumstances your presence of mind never forsakes you; the same steady firmness appears in all your actions, and though possessed of as large a share of sensibility as ever fell to the lot of woman, you are a real philosopher. I was this morning at Mr. Mortimer's retirement. Sir James went to sit a few hours with poor Arthur, who is still very disconsolate, and I took the opportunity of paying a visit to the good man. He received me with his usual tenderness, and enquired after you. He had been before informed of your quitting Elm-wood, and the reason of it. I told him you was well, and read Miss Duncannon's two letters and your last. I cannot describe to you how much he was delighted, nor will I pain you by repeating the many fine things he said of you. I staid with him two hours, and all that time he talked of nothing else. When I was coming away, he asked if we thought of going yet to town? I told him we did not intend to leave Elm-wood all the summer. He rejoiced at it, and said, when we were gone he should not know what to do with himself. I thought this a proper time to hint my desire, which I did as delicately as I could. He replied, as to leaving his humble dwelling he never intended; "besides, said he,

he, it is now too late to enter again into the world ; a man who has so long conversed with trees and water only, my dear Lady Thompson, is but little calculated to appear in the walks of society, and whose heart too is worn down with misfortunes. No, my child ; could I sometimes see your family and the excellent Miss Belville, I should have nothing to wish ; if her gentle hand or your's would perform the friendly office of closing my aged eyes, I now desire no more. I should but disgrace you was I to accept the offer of living with you ; therefore I had better continue here unknown."

"Not so, sir, answered I, nothing would give Sir James and me so much satisfaction as your consenting to live with us : Miss Belville too has said she should be happy to converse with you often ; therefore let me entreat you, in pity to us all, not to refuse this petition." "Well, well, my dear, answered he, I will consider of it." I thanked him, and took my leave greatly elated. When I returned to the wood, I found Sir James there. He laughed at my sly visit, and said, if I did not take care he should be jealous of Mr. Mortimer. "I cannot help it if you are, Sir James, replied I ; he will, I hope, be prevailed on to go with us to town, and then you must not leave us much together." "I shall not be inclined, my love, answered he, with

with two such inducements to detain me with them; but what reason have you to imagine we shall succeed in that respect?" I then told him and my mother what had passed relative to this affair. In return for my communications, Sir James said he would favour us with the adventures of the morning. He then repeated a quarrel he and Mr. Sydley had with Miss Arthur and Mrs. Sydley about Emilia's confinement, in so ludicrous a stile, that neither my mother nor I could command our risible faculties. When he had finished, I asked him how he reconciled himself to the ladies? "O, said he, I kissed them into good humour." "What, Miss Arthur! cried my mother, would she permit such liberties!" "Yes, madam, answered he, I introduced it tolerably, by saying I never had saluted her since my marriage; that, as a married man, I had a right to such favours, and therefore we would kiss and be friends. With much fuss, and a thousand exclamations of, "la! Sir James, you are the strangest man!" she suffered me to touch her olive cheek." "Really, cried I, I have the most reason to be jealous; if you go on in this manner, I shall regard Miss Arthur in no very pleasing light." "Why ay, my dear, answered he, she will prove a powerful rival to your beauties; but, trust me, Harriet, if you are never uneasy 'till
you

you see me regard another with tenderness, your whole life will be one scene of unclouded happiness; my heart is so firmly your's, that fortune cannot deprive you of it." Thus does he, from the merest trifles, take opportunities of saying the kindest things. Oh, Adeline, I cannot find words to tell you my happiness, and therefore must be silent. My mother thanks you for your sollicitude on her account, and is continually wishing you here as well as me, and every one who knows you; but as that cannot be, let us hear from you often, which will be my greatest consolation. The Miss Thompsons beg their compliments; they talk of nothing but you: in your absence I have the honour to be next regarded. Adieu, my amiable friend; believe me truly your's,

HARRIET THOMPSON.

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Portman-Square.

I Have been so perpetually engaged for this last fortnight, that I have had no opportunity of thanking my Harriet for her letter. My long absence from town made it necessary I should give some time to Mrs. Evelin's friends, who have always behaved to me with the utmost politeness; most of my days have been engrossed by them. The various amusements
they

they provided, thinking they would be agreeable no doubt, I excused myself from, on account of the recent loss I had sustained. My excuse was generally admitted. Indeed had I thought proper to propose the most extravagant thing in nature, it would have been approved of; such influence has a large fortune on the generality of the world. I find my consequence much encreased since the Admiral's death; the most profound respect is paid to my opinion, and I am attended to in preference to others, perhaps more deserving attention. Ah, my Harriet, what a cringer is man to a little insignificant pelf, though often in the possession of a villain! while, on the other hand, a man endowed with every valuable qualification, without wealth, will be disregarded, and perhaps treated with contempt! How ill a compliment is this to our boasted feeling and understandings! but the depraved modes of the world have entirely erased the fine touches of nature in the minds of most men.—I congratulate you, my dear Lady Thompson, on the prospect of prevailing with the good Mr. Mortimer; I regard such an acquisition as his society in the light of a blessing; a man like him, who has felt adversity without suffering it to sour his temper, is of all others the most desirable companion; his experience will be of real service to those he honours with regard.

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I have passed many agreeable hours with him at his romantic residence. He knows the world, and looks on it with the eye of a philosopher. Though his heart has severely felt the keen wound of disappointment in its tenderest wishes, yet he rejoices with those whose fate is more fortunate, and never suffers his private sorrows to interrupt their repose. When he talks of his lost Matilda, it is with the fondness of a parent, without the weakness of one. He sees her actions in a true light; and though he blames, still pities her. How truly great is his mind! I have listened to the effusions of his heart with the most sensible pleasure; and shall ever think his edifying society one of the greatest enjoyments I can receive. Our constant study, my Harriet, shall be to make him happy, if we can persuade him to leave his secluded dwelling; and yet it is a pity, at his time of life, to drag him again into a world whose depravity cannot fail to disgust him. Was I free from the incumbrances of wealth, I would seek just such another peaceful cell as his to end my days in. But that is not to be thought of; heaven has placed me in the busy scenes of life, and I cannot withdraw myself from them, without injuring numbers that are now benefited by my stay. I have lately spent several days at Sir Harry Evelin's, and I am more pleased with him than I used to be. I believe I have mistaken his intentions in regard to me; or, if they were of a tender kind, he has altered them; his pre-

present behaviour expresses no more than friendship. He is infinitely attentive and polite, but as a man of gallantry, that is to be expected. Sir Harry, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Evelin, do every thing which they think may amuse me; for, to acknowledge the truth, I have not entirely got over the shock I received at Nutt-Hill. He never fails to visit me once every day, sometimes twice: he then either reads or entertains me with foreign anecdotes, and as his knowledge of the world is extensive, I find him a very agreeable companion. Indeed I should be ungrateful if I was not pleased with the many things he does to oblige me. I am particularly fond of paintings: he had several in his house by the most eminent masters. I happened to say they were beautifully executed. The following morning he sent them to Portman-square, with a polite card, entreating my acceptance of them. The respectful elegance of his conduct has engaged my esteem, and I confess his conversation and company is a real satisfaction to me. The former trait, which used to disgust me in his character, is now vanished; and, though still to a degree polite, he no longer makes use of flattery. I am happy at this change, as I once feared I should receive much trouble from him on the score of love. Thus, my Harriet, am I freed from one apprehension, that, of all others, is the most intolerable to me. I hope now to remain for ever unsolicited to marry. My refusal of the Duke of Montague is

is publickly talked of, which I am not sorry for, as it may deter others from offering themselves when he has been rejected. I would not go into so much company, was I any where but at Mr. Evelin's; their circle of acquaintance is so large, that while I remain with them it is impossible to avoid it. I wish Mr. Somners was returned; then we would go to Belville-Park; I long to see again that once-loved spot. I am very uneasy for poor Louisa, and impatiently wait for the arrival of the ships which are every day expected; though I cannot conceive what the Countess de Clairville can do with people so determined. Captain Fremer is almost distracted; he is in town, and was with me yesterday. I assured him, if the next letters did not contain more favourable intelligence, I would advise Louisa to reveal the situation of her heart. I have now an immense fortune, and in spite of Mr Somners's delicacy, I will divide it with my friend; then every objection to her union with the amiable Fremer, will be obviated. If my guardian persists in his resolution of marrying his daughter to the Marquis, I will go to Montpelier, and try to convince him how unjust is such a command, when her heart is devoted to another. The former objection to my leaving England is now removed; Louisa's letter will determine my departure. I told my intentions to Captain Fremer: he wished to attend me, but that is a future consideration. Miss Duncannon begins to fear she

must perform her promise. She declares she is absolutely undone; for I shall persuade Mr. Somners to give up his reason. She behaves much better to the Colonel than she used to do, though in a degree she has recovered her spirits. She spends a great deal of her time in Portman-square, and endeavours to persuade me Sir Harry Evelin is my lover. I tell her she has a peculiar faculty of finding out things that exist not. She is now below, and will not let me write longer. Remember me with respectful compliments to your family and Mr Mortimer, and believe me to be most affectionately your's,

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Sir JAMES THOMPSON to Captain FREEMER.

Elm-wood.

NAY, prithee, Charles, send me no more of your complaints. Louisa will be your's in spite of your cowardly fears. Has she not assured you no man but yourself will have any interest in her love? Why then will you fancy evils which may never happen? faith, I believe there are enough real misfortunes in this life for any reasonable man, without creating ideal ones; though I must confess, I have had but few of fortune's frowns myself. She is a strange capricious lady, and has taken a *penchant* for my singularities, I fancy, or my wit, perhaps. Ah that is certainly the case; with my wit she is enamoured; for,

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as to personal attractions, they have no effect on her, being incapable of discovering them. Well, be her motives for kindness what they will, kind she is, and ever has been to me, and was I indifferently inclined, she is for ever throwing temptation in my way. Would you believe it, Charles! the fair Miss Arthur honours me with a degree of tender regard; and, was I not as constant as the dove to my Harriet, why egad she would draw me into an amour. I made this important discovery some days since, and all proper advantage was, as you may suppose, taken of it, to forward Arthur's affair with Emilia. Nay, so far did I prevail by flattering the fair one's predominant inclination, that she promised to give the young lady an opportunity of escaping, which would have been effected, but a circumstance happened that rendered it unnecessary. What it was, I shall unfold in order: at present, I must go on with my intrigue, which is yet in its infancy. The means by which I discovered the lady's regard, were these: one morning I took a ride to Sir Robert's, in order to talk with Harry, and give him what consolation I could. He was from home, as was the rest of the family, except Miss Alice, at least so I understood. I thought it would be horridly impolite, and like a married man, if I did not ask her how she did. For that purpose I dismounted, and sought the fair one in the garden, whither I was directed. In a bower of woodbines and jessamine the

maid was seated, like another Eve in paradise. I advanced towards her: she started at my entrance, but expressed her joy at seeing me in plain terms. I modestly thanked her (for, you know, I am a devilish modest fellow) and in return for her politeness, kissed her hand, which was not withdrawn, to my great surprize. I enquired after Sir Robert and the family; she after Lady Thompson, with a sigh. "Why do you sigh, Miss Arthur? my Harriet is well:" "I sigh not for the happy Lady Thompson, Sir James," answered she. I pressed to know the reason of her emotion, as was natural, you know. With some hesitation, she acknowledged she was affected with the tenderness of my behaviour to Lady Thompson; that it had made an impression on her heart, which was more than the united endeavours of numbers could effect. Plain, Charles! I could not misunderstand her, nor am I so little of a man of gallantry as to pretend it. I assured her my gratitude should be unbounded, that I would preserve the deepest sense of the honor she did me to my expiring moment; nay, I went so far as to swear, had I before been acquainted with her sentiments, things might not have been in their present situation. I found these insinuations had the desired effect, and therefore proceeded with redoubled spirit, pressed for a proof of her regard, (any man would have done that, Freemer, notwithstanding he was married) which I assured her she could not more effectually give me, than by aiding the innocent

passion of her nephew and Miss Stanhope. "Reflect, my dear Miss Arthur, on the pain which poor Emilia suffers in this cruel, this ungenerous confinement: the free-born mind is not to be thus enslaved without the most torturing agonies. You, Madam, who are all compassion, all gentle humanity, will, I doubt not, make her situation your own, and do every thing in your power to extricate her from it." Notwithstanding this fine speech, I found her rather inclined to give a negative to my intreaties. However, not appalled I went on, and at last, as is usual with perseverance, got the day. The Lady promised to assist the lovers with all her power, which as I know to be great, entirely satisfied me. After some time passed in conversation, which I shall not repeat to you, we mutually agreed to return into the house; but, before we could accomplish this intention, we were alarmed by the sound of voices in a very high key. The disputants proved to be no other than Mr. and Mrs. Sydley. During the absence of his lady, he had released Emilia from her confinement, by breaking open the door of her apartment. Enraged to find her daughter at liberty, Mrs. Sydley flew at her husband with the greatest violence, which so terrified Emilia, that she voluntarily consented to return to her chamber. This Sydley opposed, though without effect, the lady herself consenting. Thus were things situated when we met the contending pair. I paid my compliments to Mrs. Sydley, which, amid all her rage,

was not entirely neglected ; for she has so great a veneration for a title, that she would never forgive herself if she was guilty of the smallest inattention to the man who is possessed of one. She answered me with all the politeness she could at the moment command, and related the ill-usage she had received from Mr. Sydley, vowing with the utmost passion Emilia should not behold daylight till Nancy was married. " Upon my soul, madam, cried Sydley, interrupting her, you are mistaken, for this night she shall be at liberty, if I hire half the country to storm the entrenchments you have made. Mrs. Sydley is a most inimitable general, Sir James ; but, for once, her deep-laid schemes will be frustrated." " That they shall not, Sir, replied the lady with warmth ; for I will keep guard at the door myself all night." " Very well, child ; just as you please ; but remember, we shall certainly lay all dead who oppose us." " Well, I don't care if you do kill me, replied his charming helpmate ; you will be hanged for it, that is one comfort." " What, for you, Mrs. Sydley ! no, upon my soul, you deceive yourself ; you are not of such consequence : on the contrary, the world will get rid of a very troublesome, noisy woman ; dam'me, Thompson, if I do not enjoy the idea of being again single, and if ever you see me married a second time, why post me for a puppy. Egad I wonder you had courage to marry ; but when I consider the youth, beauty, and sweetness of lady Thompson, I don't neither ; but to be tied to an ugly old woman ;

man ; oh, insupportable !" In this manner he proceeded, raising his voice to drown that of his lady's, 'till a servant, with an agitated countenance, caused both parties to be silent. As soon as the fellow found there was a possibility of being heard, he informed Mrs. Sydley Miss Stanhope had just got into a chaise and fix at the end of the park, with a man in a great coat and mask ; that he attempted to stop them, by calling out, but the gentleman presented a pistol, and swore if he did not hold his tongue, he was a dead man. Terrified at this threat, he promised to be silent. After giving a letter for Mrs. Sydley, they drove off like lightning. Sydley snatched the letter from him, which contained these words :

" Madam,

" You need not be uneasy at my absence, as
 " most likely you will. I go to marry a man
 " I like better than him you had selected for me,
 " though to plague my sister, I pretended to love
 " Mr. Arthur. You may now release the Chick-
 " en-hearted Emilia, and make her happy with
 " her lover ; they will meet no more interrupti-
 " ons from me. When I am united to the man
 " of my choice, I will call on you to settle the
 " matter of fortune ; 'till which time I remain
 " your's,

ANN STANHOPE."

" Excellent ! cried Sydley, flinging the letter to his wife ; now, madam, behold the difference be-

34 FEMALE STABILITY.

tween your daughters, and learn to value the worth of Emilia as you ought." Words cannot do justice to the rage of the lady; she would have them instantly pursued, but nobody appeared willing to undertake the office. At last, finding she could not help herself, she became calm. She promised to give Emilia liberty, and transfer her affection to her instead of her runaway daughter. Finding peace likely to be concluded, I prepared to take my leave, and called for my servant, who was nowhere to be found. This I thought very singular, but contented myself with riding home without one, supposing he was returned for something he wanted. I related the situation of things at Trout Hall to my Harriet, omitting only my intended amour with the lady of that mansion. My gentle love rejoiced at the prospect of her friend's happiness, and lamented the undutiful flight of Miss Stanhope. I enquired for La Junesse; he was not returned; I then began to suspect he was the lover Miss Stanhope had eloped with. This proved to be the case: he wrote me a letter on their way to Scotland, filled with his happiness and good fortune. I took this curious epistle to Trout Hall, and endeavoured to reconcile Mrs. Sydley to her humble son-in-law. But it was not to be done, no consideration could induce her to forgive Miss Stanhope's marrying a servant. One good effect this discovery has had, which is, to make Mrs. Sydley as anxious for Emilia's marriage

with Arthur, as she was before for Miss Stanhope's; she fears something may happen to prevent it; and at last, she shall have no title in her family: I have wrote you a long letter, Freeman, not so much in the opiate stile as your's, I confess. Send me no more such melancholy catalogues of fancied misery. Hope every thing you wish, and you will be happy.

JAMES THOMPSON.

Sir HARRY EVELIN to Captain MONTAGUE.

Berners-Street.

THE return of Miss Belville has restored me to happiness, and let fortune do what she will, I am now regardless of her. Oh, Montague, she is more charming than ever. I have engaged her esteem as a friend, and by the most studious attention to oblige her, I have obtained her gratitude; nay, so well I have disguised my feelings, that she suspects not I am influenced by love, and yet, how she can be mistaken is amazing. My very soul adores her; I cannot, will not, live without her; a little longer I must rule my headstrong passion, and then I hope to secure her mine for ever. She gives me all the opportunities I can wish of being with her: I have fortunately hit on several schemes that have entertained her, and ever since she has treated me with the utmost distinction. I am so happy in her society,
that

that I never venture to say a word of my passion, lest it should make her withdraw that charming freedom with which she behaves. The very name of love pronounced by my lips would make her start from me with horror; never was any woman so constant as Miss Belville. She speaks of Mr. Grenville to this day with the utmost affection. I once imagined constancy a vague expression; but I see in this lady, a proof that it really does exist. When I hear her speak of her Augustus, I am ready to despair; then her beauty inflames my senses to such a degree, that I am resolved to make her mine, tho' I was sure of death the next hour. I have not been used to meet such opposition to my desires, and cannot bear it. She is not to be persuaded into happiness, and therefore must be deluded: some way or other before many months she shall be Lady Evelin. When I have accomplished that first wish of my heart, the whole endeavours of my life shall be to make her happy. I begin to think, Montague, it is very possible to chain the affections to one woman, (such a one as Adeline I mean.) Yet the time was when I thought I could not remain constant even to her; but then my regard was hatred to what I now experience. Love is too poor a word to express my feelings; 'tis madness, dotage, or worse: Her endowments of mind and person are so superior to the generality of her sex, that I shall never cease to adore her. No beauty but her's can

give me the least pleasure : No conversation, however sensible, but brings her superior sense to my remembrance. I am miserable out of her sight, and think every moment an age till the hour comes which brings me to her. Since the death of Admiral Harrison, I have seen her every day. Her spirits were much hurt by that event, and I had the satisfaction to find the efforts I made to raise them, not disregarded. Knowing her benevolent disposition, I have sought objects for her to relieve. Diffusive charity is her chief delight. Her large addition of fortune enables her to indulge her heavenly temper to its utmost extent. The virtues of this lady charm as much as her beauty, nor do I know which is most exquisite ; would she but deign to treat me with complacency, she might make me what she wished, and in time I might become a good man ; but if she will drive me to extremities, she must take the consequences. I endeavour to conceal my emotions as much as possible before her. I know she must be drawn by artful management to depart from her resolution, and therefore stifle my violent sensations, lest she should treat me with severity ; which, upon my soul, I do not think I could bear. This morning my sister brought a letter into Miss Belville's dressing-room, which she said was from the Duke of Montague: it contained nothing more than enquiries concerning her health, and wishes for her happiness ; at the conclusion, he begged Mrs. Evelin would
favour

favour him with an answer, to inform him of Miss Belville's welfare: "I will save you the trouble of writing, madam, said the lovely maid, and answer the Duke's letter myself. He has suffered much on my account, and I owe him this reparation. He is a very worthy man, Sir Harry, continued she, perhaps you know his character?" "I have heard his Grace spoke of, madam, answered I, as an ornament to nobility, and when I was informed of his disappointment, I shared in his distress." "You would indeed have pitied him, Sir Harry, said Mrs. Evelin, had you been witness to his behaviour; I never saw a man in such an agony as the Duke was when he left Miss Belville; indeed, Adeline, I thought you very cruel." "Ah, madam, answered she with a sigh, I myself underwent a great deal that day; I really esteem the Duke, and love his mother with a filial regard; she ever treated me with the most flattering distinction. But it was not in my power to act otherwise than I did. They knew my attachment to Mr. Grenville, and therefore could not expect to succeed. I never could have given my hand to his Grace; my dear Augustus once suffered from that apprehension; that thought intruded itself upon my mind while he was pleading for it, and raised a disgust in my heart I could not conquer."---She wiped her lovely eyes, and seemed lost in thought; but soon recovering herself, she apologised to us for her absence. "I am not happy, madam, said she to my sister, let

let that plead my excuse." We assured her nothing she did needed an excuse, nor indeed does it, Montague; she is all grace and enchanting sensibility. Soon after this she left us. "I would not keep an oppressed heart a moment in suspense, said she," quitting the room. My eyes followed her as far as they could, and then returned to admire her picture, which is drawn at full length; in this apartment I expressed the disquietude of my thoughts to my sister. She said she could give me no comfort, as she was convinced Miss Belville would never change her determination of living single. Finding she had nothing to offer that would afford me any satisfaction, I returned home and took up my pen to write to you; I shall now go back to Portman Square, where I shall enjoy the satisfaction of contemplating the most beautiful countenance in the world. The sable robes she wears make her delicate complexion still more dazzling.---But I will relieve you from this letter, and say no more of her perfections---The glimmering of hope contained in your last about Emilia, has given me infinite pleasure---If she is advised to the South of France, I would have her go by all means; remember me to her. Adieu,

HENRY EVELIN.

Miss

Miss SOMNERS to Miss BELVILLE.

Montpelier.

I Have such delightful intelligence to communicate to my Adeline, that I hardly know how to begin the pleasing recital; but with all the connection in my power I will relate the cause of my present exultation---For a week after my last, I remained in a state of the most acute uneasiness; my father continued to treat me with reserve, as did the old Marquis: even Madam de Belfleur had withdrawn her usual affection, and every countenance wore a gloom on it that stabbed me to the heart. No one but the Marquis took the least notice of me; he was all attention and politeness; sometimes he spoke of my father's partiality to him with a triumph that shocked me infinitely; and when I checked his transports with assurances I never would be his, he answered, he hoped time, joined to my father's influence, would induce me to regard him more favourably. He had lost his former intreative manner, and seemed to think nothing would prevent my being his wife. I confess this conduct raised a disgust in my heart that is not to be described, as I once thought him incapable of it, and felt for him the tenderest sisterly regard; but now his ungenerous perseverance banished those sentiments in his favour. I studiously endeavoured to avoid him, as the rest of the family did me: all my
hope

hope was on the interest of the Countess, whom I expected speedily. I thought every hour an age till the time was fixed for her leaving Paris, which at length was done; she wrote me word she would be at Montpellier in three days at farthest, and desired I would inform the Marquis of her intended visit. Nothing could equal my joy at the prospect of again beholding this amiable woman: I depended upon her persuasive eloquence to move my father, and tho' I could not well account to myself in what manner she could be of essential service to me, yet I flattered myself she would prove so. Filled with these ideas, I sought the old Marquis, inspired with more spirit than had taken possession of me for some time; the servants told me he was in the garden: thither I went, and perceived my father, the Marquis and his son, walking together in earnest conversation: I came near them before they saw me. "Indeed, my lord, said my father, I flatter myself we shall succeed at last; the obstinacy of Louisa has given me much pain; but if she is the Marchioness de Reviers, it will more than pay me for my anxiety. If your love will hold out, continued he, to De Reviers we shall get the better of this perverse girl, depend on it." "You know, Sir, replied the Marquis, I would hazard every thing to make Miss Somners mine, therefore my steadiness is not to be doubted." I staid to hear no more, lest they should observe me. I turned down another walk and met them; the Marquis immediately came
towards

towards me, and offered to take my hand (which I held back): "this is an unexpected happiness, charming Louisa, said he, may I flatter myself you thought of me when you entered the garden?" "No, indeed my Lord, answered I rather stiffly, my business is with your father." He looked mortified at this reply, and called to the old Marquis, who with my father was gone forward. "We will follow them, my Lord, you need not trouble yourself to call." I staid not for his answer, but walked from him; he followed with his arms folded, and appeared dejected. The gentlemen would have avoided me, but I stopped them by laying my hand on the Marquis's arm: "Will you give me leave to speak with you, my Lord?" Certainly, madam; what are your commands?" "Alas, Sir, I have no commands, I only intreat; but that is not now the subject I have to speak of; I have a letter from the Countess de Clairville; she means to pay your Lordship a visit shortly on her way to England, and begged I would make her intentions known to you; the reason of my now troubling you, was to know what answer I should return."—"That I shall be infinitely happy to see her, my dear Miss Somners, (replied the Marquis, with great affection,) and think she honors me by the visit; tho' I have not the pleasure of knowing the Countess personally, I have long done so by character; the Count was one of my most intimate friends, and sincerely lamented by me; therefore, madam, if you will invite her in my name,

name, I shall be very much obliged to you." "I certainly will, my Lord," replied I; and making a curtsy was going: "Stay, said my father, where are you hurrying?" "I feared, Sir, my presence was disagreeable to you, and as I would willingly remove every thing that might give you the smallest pain, I thought it best to retire." He seemed affected with this, and took my hand with tenderness: "Why, my dear, should you imagine your sight disagreeable to me? long has it been my comfort, and still would be so, if you would listen to reason and make me happy." "Ah, Sir, answered I, if I could make you happy by resigning my life, I would not hesitate; but indeed I cannot give my hand to the Marquis." "Hold, Madam, cried de Reviere hastily; if you will not see me die before you, pronounce not so definitively." "Why, my Lord, answered I with warmth, will you thus interrupt me? may I not be allowed to expostulate with my father?" "Ah, Louisa, replied he with a sigh, can I bear to hear you say you will never be mine, and not interrupt you? No, madam! I will speak, and if possible prevent your cruel expressions." "Very well, my Lord; I see you are no way to be dealt with; your affection has neither generosity nor delicacy in it." I turned from him in order again to address my father; but he was gone; he had left the garden with the Marquis unperceived by me: this hurt me infinitely, nor could I forbear

bear expressing my chagrin by a copious shower of tears---the Marquis suffered me to weep for some time without the least interruption; I thought he observed me with a degree of pleasure. "Ah, Louisa, said he, why will you not suffer me to dry those tears? Consent but to be mine, and your cause of sorrow immediately ceases. Mr. Somners will give you his wonted affection, and every person in the family study to make you happy." "If I cannot be reconciled to my father, without giving you my hand, I must for ever remain the miserable creature I am at present. I know not, my Lord, if the conduct you have for some time pursued is consistent with the violent love you feel for me; according to my ideas, it rather expresses hatred; but perhaps the custom of your country authorises persecution as the most effectual recommendation to a lady's favour; if you wished to make me wretched, you have amply succeeded---I am indeed most exquisitely miserable." The violence of my emotions would not suffer me to proceed; I threw my handkerchief over my face and was silent---The Marquis took my almost passive hand, and begged me to be composed. "Why, charming Miss Somners, do you thus distress yourself? say, but you will be my wife, and I will engage to bring Mr. Somners to you with the same fondness and affection he has ever shewn you." "No, Sir, answered I, snatching my hand from him with violence; I would rather die than be obliged

ed to you for any thing; this is the last time I will be alone with you, if I can avoid it." He would have detained me, but I broke from him, and ran to my own apartment --- there I passed a melancholy two hours in reflections on my past happiness and present misery. How often, my dear Adeline, did I wish those peaceful days returned that once we were blessed with! --- With these ideas I passed my time till dinner, where I was summoned at the usual hour. --- Nothing was said of what had passed, and the behaviour of all was distant and reserved. When the repast was ended, I arose and left the room, which was permitted. In this manner passed two days, and had it not been for the hope of soon seeing the Countess, my spirits would have yielded to their cruelty. --- The third morning I arose with more pleasurable sensations than for some time had taken possession of my heart, as I imagined the Countess would arrive before dinner. When I joined the family at breakfast, the old Marquis expressed his happiness at seeing me look so well: my father bid me good morrow, and made some observation on my dress in the same tone of voice he formerly used in speaking to me. For the first time for several mornings we entered on general topics; and, finding the whole company in harmony with each other, I did not attempt to withdraw, which very much pleased all present. --- We continued together till near twelve, when the noise of the Countess's equipage driving into

into the great gates, caused us to move. The young Marquis hastened to hand her out of the carriage; I met her at the door: we embraced each other with real affection. "My dear Louisa, said she, how happy am I to behold you again!"---The old Marquis interrupted us with welcoming her to Montpelier. "Come, madam, said I, suffer me to introduce you to my father." She trembled very much, and leaned against the wainscot.---"I am not well, Miss Somners, said she; can you get me a little *eau de luce*?" I flew to obey her, and when I returned, beheld her locked in the arms of my father. I stood amazed at this sight, so unexpected and extraordinary. My father's words soon explained the mystery. "Alas! my dear sister, said he, what have I not suffered on your account? where have you been concealed for so many years? how could I have looked so long in vain for you?" Then turning and seeing me, "Louisa, continued he, behold your aunt, your long-lost aunt Somners; the amiable Maria, which you have heard me so often lament, still lives in the Countess de Clairville," ---- I flew to her, and threw myself at her feet: "Ah, madam, exclaimed I, and are you indeed my dear aunt Somners, whose sufferings have so often caused me to shed tears? I cannot find words to express my joy."---She raised me with emotion, and tenderly embraced me. "Compose yourself, my dear Louisa, I am indeed happy enough to be
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be related to you; I would not before discover this secret to you, that, as a friend only, I might have an opportunity of observing your disposition; the event has turned out as I wished, and proved your heart possessed of every virtue. I now acknowledge with pride I am your relation, as well as the sincerest of your friends." Again she embraced me, and turned to my father: "Just such a lovely woman as Louisa, my dear brother, was your Elvira, when I left her: Alas! I little thought never to behold her again; from my niece I have heard she is no more, and have sincerely lamented her. We have mutual tales of woe to relate." --- She stopped, and wiped her eyes. My father threw his arms about her in an agony. "We have indeed, my sister, said he; since we parted, both have lost their greatest comfort." He could not proceed, and they both continued silent for some minutes. --- The Countess broke it first. "Say not so, answered she; we have still one comfort left; Louisa will be the delight of your declining years as well as mine; I have known her undisguised sentiments, and find her possessed of every laudable and just idea: her virtues have endeared her to me, and I regard her with maternal affection." My father acknowledged I had been his consolation and support ever since my mother's death; and, till very lately, he had no reason to say any thing to my prejudice. --- "I know what you allude to, interrupted the Countess; we will talk of that
some

some other opportunity; at present we ought to apologize to the Marquis for taking up his time." --- He made her a polite answer, and we all went into the dining room. --- When we were a little composed, the Countess delivered a letter from Madam de Reviers to the Marquis: she spoke of her in the highest terms, and regretted her determination to live for ever in a cloister. The Marquis attended to the praises of his daughter with parental tenderness, and joined the Countess in deploring her bigotry to a secluded life. --- The behaviour of Madam de Clairville and my father to each other, is the most tenderly affectionate you can imagine: he expressed his desire to know what had happened to her, which she promised to gratify when her spirits were in a better situation. --- We passed the day most delightfully, all but the young Marquis, who seemed to dread the persuasions of the Countess with my father. However, he disguised his feelings as well as he could, and I believe no one but myself discovered them. In the evening I attended my amiable aunt to her apartment; she assured me every endeavour should be exerted in favour of Captain Freemer; she said she proposed divulging our attachment to my father the next morning, and she had no doubt of succeeding with him; --- "As to Sir Richard Freemer's objections, Louisa, continued she, to his son's union with you, they will be of no consequence, as your fortune will be at least equal to his, or
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perhaps superior; it is in my power to make you in that respect a match fit for the first Peer in England; therefore, my dear girl, be no longer apprehensive about what may happen from that quarter."---"Ah, Madam, replied I, your goodness distresses me; I cannot find expressions to thank you as I wish."---"Strive not for words, my excellent Louisa, replied she, you owe me nothing; I have received much pleasure from your friendship, and shall be glad to return the same degree of satisfaction to you, who are doubly endeared to me by your sufferings and virtue. My fortune is very large, much larger than I desire; but, for your sake, I rejoice that it is so; as it will enable me to remove those obstacles which have prevented your being united to the man you love. I would advise you, Louisa, to insist on Captain Freemer's quitting the army before you give him your hand: had I pursued a similar conduct, I should not perhaps at this moment have the most amiable of men to lament; but I will no longer detain you from your repose, continued she, wiping her eyes; I find myself growing melancholy, and therefore will bid you a good night." I begged she would suffer me to stay by her for some time, but she would not consent; and, tenderly embracing me, led me to the door. I retired to bed, but not to sleep: joy now kept me waking as much as grief had done before: how often did I wish for you, my Adeline, to share

my transports on this valuable acquisition! As soon as I arose the next morning, I enquired for the Countess, and was informed she was with my father. I guessed their conversation, and waited with the utmost impatience to know the event of her communications. In about half an hour she entered my dressing-room; I had not power to ask her how she had succeeded. "My dear Louisa, said she, be not uneasy, all will be very well; I have related the situation of your heart to my brother: he wishes you had been more explicit, before he had gone any lengths with the Marquis: however, he hopes to bring things about with them, and assures you, by me, you have nothing to fear from his anger, as the object of your regard is a gentleman. At first, he was rather violent; but by proper management I brought him to reason; and he acknowledged it would be wrong to force your hand, when your heart is absolutely another's. He says, the breaking off with the Marquis must be managed with delicacy and openness. I have told him my intentions towards you, and he thinks them right. And now, my dear girl, I think I may congratulate you on the conclusion of your trials." I threw myself at her feet, and thanked her in broken and incoherent expressions. While I was on my knees, my father came in. He seemed affected, on observing the emotions I discovered. I felt myself blush as he looked at me. He perceived it, and advanced

towards me with parental tenderness. "Ah, sir, exclaimed I, can you forgive me? can you pardon my first instance of disobedience?" "I can, Louisa, replied he; rise, and be assured I look on you with the same regard as ever. Why was you not thus explicit before? you would have saved both yourself and me a great deal of pain." "I dreaded to tell you the situation of my heart, answered I, when I found how much you had espoused the interest of De Reviers: but, sir, I would have died, rather than have married without your consent. Yet my principles restrained me from complying with your commands in favor of the Marquis, as Captain Freemer possessed my heart. I think, sir, when you are acquainted with the object of my regard, you will no longer wonder at my preference," "Ah, replied he, so does every love-sick girl think. But come, Louisa; I forgive your concealment, and will try to break off with the Marquis; though, I confess, not without reluctance: I should have liked him for a son-in-law, better than any man I know. But, since it cannot be so, I must learn to be content. I know, without love there can be no happiness in a married state; but, as I thought your heart entirely free from any prepossession, I flattered myself De Reviers might at last make an impression on it; which may be an excuse for my conduct." This he condescended to say, my Adeline. I was much affected, and begged his

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pardon for my reserve, with real contrition; telling him the first motives of it, and the reason of its being continued. He stopped me, by saying, "The Countess, my dear, has told me the whole story of your love; and there is but one thing in which I want to be satisfied." "What is that?" said I, with visible terror. "Nay, do not be alarmed, replied he; it is nothing more than to see the copy of your letter to Captain Freemer, on your leaving England." "That you shall, sir, immediately," said I; and taking it from my pocket-book, gave it into his hand. He seemed affected while he was perusing it. When he had finished, "My dear girl, said he, that composition does you honor; I admire you for it; and assure you, had I seen that letter, the Marquis would never have had so strenuous an advocate in me. If you please, I will keep it: no answer can be given so effectually to dash the hopes of one lover, as this letter written to another." He then left the apartment. When he was gone, I again thanked the Countess for her interposition, and without restraint expressed the effusions of gratitude. With the flattering attention of friendship she listened to my acknowledgments, and shared the happiness I experienced. When we joined the rest of the family at breakfast, the Marquis wore a melancholy gloom on his countenance that affected me a great deal. My own misery at an end, I felt for him sincerely, and would have given the world to

have saved him from the pangs of disappointment. When breakfast was over, the Countess arose, and walked to the window. "Louisa, said she, you must shew me the gardens, which from hence appear very beautiful." The Marquis offered to accompany us; but my father desired he would stay. We quitted the room, and left him, my father, the old Marquis, and Madam de Belfleur together. We walked near an hour. The amiable Countess endeavoured to reason me out of my apprehensions concerning the Marquis. When she thought we had been long enough absent, she proposed returning to the house: We were going to quit the gardens when I perceived the Marquis walking hastily towards us. "Louisa, said she, I will leave you; I see by the countenance of de Reviers he knows his fate, I need not tell you to soften his disappointment." I promised I would not shock him by one unguarded expression, and she turned down another walk, while I proceeded towards the Marquis. He approached me with the utmost dejection. "Louisa, said he, I come to take a final leave of you." He spoke with distraction: "What do you mean, my Lord?" replied I. "Ah, cruel girl! exclaimed he, you know what I mean; I am miserable; and care not what becomes of me." I suffered him to vent his complaints without interruption, and when I thought he was less agitated, I strove to give him comfort; related the whole of my

attachment with the utmost explicitness, and my reasons for not doing it before. He listened to all I said with great attention, and seemed affected at several parts of the detail; especially when I described the misery I experienced at leaving England without taking leave of Freemer. "Ah, Miss Somners, said he, (when I had done speaking) you have felt the anxiety of love; surely you must pity me." "I do, my Lord, sincerely pity all who feel that agitating passion, especially your Lordship; my heart has often laboured under the most poignant sensations on your account; yet, I feared to make you my confidant. You cannot blame my conduct, De Revers, as it was ever actuated by honour and rectitude." "No, answered he, I do not; I only am to blame. Oh, Louisa! continued he, taking my hand, would I had never seen you! I cannot bear the idea of losing you. The very thought is madness." He walked from me in the greatest distress. I followed him, and laid my hand on his arm; "We will not part, my Lord: I ever loved you as a friend, and will continue to do so. You once flattered me with the prospect of seeing you in England: may I not hope you will fulfil that engagement?" "And will you suffer me to see you in England?" replied he, will not the happy Freemer grudge me the pleasure of your friendship?" "No, my Lord, he will not; he is the most generous of men, and will rejoice that his Louisa has obtained

tained a friend of such worth." "Well then, I will visit you in England, where your father talks of soon returning. Ah, Louisa! how shall I part with you? I am the most miserable of men." I strove to give him comfort, but in vain! He insisted, no human disappointment was greater than his. When he grew calm, I related to him the story of your unhappy love. Will you forgive me, Adeline, for making your misfortunes known to the Marquis? I think you will, when you are informed they had the effect I wished. He wondered at your sufferings, but at your patience more. In pitying you, his own disappointment seemed lost. "I should like to see this lady, Miss Somners: perhaps she would regard me with a degree of friendship, as having suffered, like herself, from love." "When you come to England, my Lord, I will introduce you to Miss Belville, who is the most lovely and accomplished woman in the world." I then read to him several of your letters, with which he was enchanted. Finding this method had a good effect on him, I promised to let him know more of your extraordinary character; and we returned to the house. The Marquis frequently lamented his misery in the most pathetic terms, and talked of leaving Montpellier; but I persuaded him to the contrary, telling him his absence would give me great uneasiness. This declaration induced him to lay aside his intention. As he led me into the parlour I trembled excessively: the Mar-

quis observed it, and enquired the reason of my agitation. I told him I apprehended his father's displeasure. "Ah, Louisa! answered he, he is only concerned, not angry: it is not in nature to be displeased with you." He opened the door: the old Marquis arose, and took my hand: "I am heartily sorry, my dear miss Sommers, said he, for the uneasiness you have suffered from my family. Impute my behaviour, madam, to the desire of making an only son happy. Had I known the real situation of your heart, dear as he justly is to me, I should never have pleaded for him: but ignorance induced me to persevere; which I fear has caused you to pass many painful moments in this house, when I should have wished every thing to have been rendered agreeable to you. But it is now over; and we must rely on the goodness of your disposition to pardon the persecution you have received on the Marquis's account. I shall ever deplore your loss as a daughter; yet I cannot help admiring the steadiness of your affection to the gentleman who has been happy enough to obtain your heart: and all the reparation I can now make for my former conduct, is, to wish you continued happiness with him you love; who, I have heard, is a man of great merit." "This generosity, my Lord, answered I, reassures my heart, that was depressed by the fear of having offended you: I lament, with the utmost sincerity, my being the unfortunate, tho' innocent cause of unhappiness

to a man I shall ever esteem. Had not my heart been engaged by the merit of Captain Fremer, it would have selected the Marquis, from the rest of the world, for its dearest partner: and be assured, my Lord, the liveliest gratitude for the affection he has honoured me with, will ever remain in indelible characters, while it continues to beat. To be restored again to the good opinion of your Lordship and my father, gives me the most sensible pleasure. Every painful moment I have passed at Montpelier shall be for ever obliterated from my memory." "Amiable girl, said the Countess, this behaviour is what I expected from you: every hour, my Louisa, endears you more to me." "And so it does to me, answered my father; I am sorry, my love, I was not more gentle with you: this explanation might then have long ago taken place." "Ah, my dear sir, replied I, you have ever been the best of fathers; the fault was mine, in concealing any thing from so indulgent a parent: your goodness overpowers me." "Compose yourself, my Louisa, replied he; from this hour your uneasiness is at an end. I am sorry things have been carried so far: but I flattered myself time might have done much for the Marquis, as I imagined your affections disengaged; but as I now find to the contrary, I will no longer persist in desiring you to favor De Reviers, though I shall ever deplore his ill success: no man breathing would have been so acceptable to me, in the light of a

son-in-law." These words raised my drooping spirits, and I thanked my father with the utmost gratitude for his indulgence; though, in consideration of the Marquis, I suppress my joy in a great degree. When my father had ceased speaking to me, he went to the window where De Reviere stood, and talked to him for some time. I could not distinguish what they said, till the Marquis raised his voice, and made him this answer. "Be assured, Mr. Sommers, I shall ever look on you as my sincerest friend: though I am miserable, my heart still retains some principles of gratitude, and will ever acknowledge your goodness. Had your lovely daughter given me her hand, I should have thought myself infinitely obliged to you: and, as things are situated, my obligations are not lessened." He sighed deeply; my father seemed affected; I was really so: indeed, every person present shared his anguish. The old Marquis and the Countess strove to alleviate his concern by the most sensible arguments. He heard them with attention, but replied, "his heart pleaded against them." His dejection was the only allay to my happiness. A month passed away with agreeable expedition: every day I had the pleasure of seeing myself reinstated in my father's love. He frequently deplored the severity of his former behaviour, and condescended to say I had not deserved it. Oh, Adeline! I cannot express to you by words the joy which filled my heart on this delightful change. I once more
looked

looked forward to happiness; and anticipated our return to England with heart-felt pleasure. The amiable Countess always indulged me in talking of that dear spot, and deplored her departure from it in the most pathetic language: she, as well as the rest of the family, sought, by every method their affection could suggest, to banish the melancholy of the Marquis. He avoided all their solicitude, and never appeared but when there was an absolute necessity. His apparent misery occasioned me infinite uneasiness: I would have done any thing in my power to restore him to tranquility, and urged every argument I could think of, to render him more contented with his fate. To me he attended: but my endeavours were not crowned with success. A few days since, as I was walking alone in the gardens, he came to me: as I did not expect him, I started at his appearance. He looked pale and unhappy. I was affected, and turned from him. "Louisa, said he, in a melancholy tone, I have been endeavouring to bring my mind to bear the idea of losing you; but I find it will distract me: I love you more than ever." "Alas! my Lord, answered I, why will you thus indulge a hopeless passion? Call your reason to your aid, and conquer your unfortunate prepossession." "Ah, charming Louisa, replied he, sighing, could I once obtain that victory over my heart, I might again be happy. But it is impossible. I cannot cease to adore you. Pity my sensati-

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ons; they are involuntary. I know you never can be mine: but I have so long cherished the dear idea, that the cruel certainty of your being another's will break my heart." His accent, countenance and manners were moving, beyond description. "How unfortunate am I, my Lord, to be the cause of this distress! my heart is oppressed with sorrow for your situation, and I would relieve your anxiety, were it in my power." "I thank you, Miss Sommers, replied he: you are not to blame. I was born to be miserable. You say you would do all in your power to relieve my anxiety: accept then this representative of a man who truly adored you; and suffer me to think you will sometimes bestow a thought on me, amid your happiness with Captain Freemer. The knowledge that you will not banish me entirely from your remembrance, will be an alleviation to my sufferings. And when I have conquered myself so far as to behold you (without madness) in the arms of another, I will see you in England." He gave me his picture in miniature, set round with diamonds. I would not pain him by a refusal, and therefore took it. "For this valuable present, my Lord, receive my warmest thanks. I shall ever look on this portrait with real pleasure; and while I reflect on the many obligations I have to the original, I shall sincerely deplore the waywardness of his destiny." Believe me, De Reviers, my happiness will never be complete, till I see you more easy
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and contented." My acceptance of his picture seemed to delight him. I turned the discourse to less interesting subjects; and he appeared more composed than I had seen him since the discovery of my attachment to Fremer. We were joined by the Countess, who expressed her satisfaction at the alteration in the Marquis; and by every sensible endeavour strove to preserve his cheerfulness. He appeared touched with what she said, and promised to gain a more composed frame of mind, if that was possible: "but I fear, madam, continued he, it is not to be obtained. An attachment so strong as mine can never be conquered." "You know not, my Lord, answered the Countess, what your resolution will overcome, till you are put to the trial. I acknowledge, to conquer a prepossession is very difficult; nay, I do not think it possible to be entirely got the better of: yet time will soften the wound, and make it more tolerable; I can experimentally say so. No one has suffered more from love than myself; yet I survived, and am not absolutely miserable; though, for many years, I underwent the most acute anguish. Yet I was obliged to conceal the feelings of my heart from the Count de Clairville. He loved me passionately, and had a right to all my gratitude." She stopped: and, finding she was silent, the Marquis addressed her; "I have frequently wished, Madam, to know the material incidents of your life; and, if you will favor me with
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the communication, it will be doubly agreeable at this juncture." I seconded his request with every entreaty I could think of; and the Countess promised to gratify our curiosity in the afternoon, when my father and the Marquis were present. "You will find, de Reviers, continued this excellent woman, you are not the only one made unhappy by a tender disappointment; and I hope you will glean some entertainment from what I have to relate. I know nothing assists so much in driving melancholy from the mind, as being interested in the fate and misfortunes of others: therefore, though the detail must unavoidably give me much pain, yet will I with pleasure enter on it, in hopes of banishing your dejection for a moment." The Marquis thanked her with the utmost politeness, for her attention to him: and, before we could enter again on the topic, we were summoned to dinner; which was no sooner over, than the Marquis reminded Madam de Clairville of her engagement. "I have promised these young people, said she, addressing the old Marquis and Madam de Belfleur, to relate to them all that has happened to me, from the time I left England, to the death of the Count. If it will not be tiresome to your Lordship and this Lady, I will now begin the recital; as I know my brother wishes to hear it." They both assured her nothing would give them greater pleasure than to be made acquainted with the particulars of her life. As I have now an opportunity,

nity, Adeline, I will give you the Countess's history in her own words. After some recollection, she began as follows, addressing herself to my father :

“ I need not expatiate on the happiness I enjoyed for many years in England, after my union with Colonel Somners, as it was well known to you: I will therefore go on from the time of my leaving the dear scenes of my felicity.---After our parting with you at Dover, I urged every argument my reason could suggest, to persuade the Colonel to continue in England, and resign his commission. So far did my affection lead me, that I forgot his honor, and listened only to the dictates of love. Though my Edward steadily withstood all my entreaties, he answered me with the utmost tenderness. He represented in the most pathetic manner the odium which would be cast on his name, if he quitted the army; assured me no other consideration should deter him from making me happy; but, that his honor was dearer to him than his life. I saw the struggles in his breast between the tenderness of his regard for me, and love for his country: I therefore forbore to mention a resignation that must cost him so dear, though my heart was oppressed with the utmost despair. We soon arrived in France. My Edward prepared for immediate action. As the war had been of a long continuance, it was thought this would be the definitive battle. The
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situation of my heart I cannot describe to you, when I found the armies were so soon to engage. The appearance of the Colonel at the English camp seemed to give universal satisfaction. He was esteemed by all the officers, and adored by his men; they were all in high spirits, and declared they entertained not the least doubt of victory. This delighted my dear Sommers, who was a soldier by nature. I never remember to have seen him so elevated as the night before the engagement. As to myself, no words can do justice to my feelings: my sad heart presaged the fatal catastrophe of my husband, and I was on the verge of distraction. He strove to banish my apprehensions, and inspire me with hope that he should escape the fury of the battle. But all his tenderness could urge, had no effect on my mind. In vain I endeavoured to get the better of my dejection for his sake; I sunk beneath my fears, and was the most miserable of women. When he took leave of me, all kind of fortitude fled: I hung about him, kneeled, and begged he would not leave me. His resolution seemed a moment to desert him, when he beheld my agonizing emotions; and he was quite softened. "Break not my heart, Maria, exclaimed he; I cannot bear your tears. I hope, for your sake, heaven will preserve me: but, if it should have fated me to fall, think I died nobly; and, as a soldier should, in the defence of my king and country." "Oh! answered I, what consolation will that

be to my affliction, if I am destined to lose you? Attend to the entreaties of your Maria, my dearest Edward; quit this vile land, and seek some desert, where we may live free from the plagues of war." "Alas! my poor mistaken Love, replied he, thy affection leads thee to think of things impossible. No, Maria: I am incapable of flying. I feel for your sorrow most acutely: and, while I contemplate your anguish, my heart swells with the fondest love: but love must yield to honour. I shall return, most amiable of women, with glory to your arms. Look forward, my Maria, with hope; and depend on it, before the sun declines, we shall be crowned with victory." "Ah! no, cried I: I shall see you no more. Never, never, shall I again behold!" --- I could not proceed. My emotions overcame me, and I fainted: one fit succeeded another, for several hours. When I came to myself, I enquired for the Colonel. My woman told me he had been gone some time, and gave me a note which was just brought from the camp. I tore it from her, and read these words:"

"Let me intreat my beloved Maria to endure her present trials with some degree of resolution: I flatter myself they will be soon over; and before many hours are elapsed, I shall fly impatiently to her arms, and lay my laurels at her feet. The armies are now within sight of each other. I go to prove my real attachment to England: if I fall,

fall, it is nobly; but for you, it would not make me uneasy; though on your dear account I pray to be preserved. The idea of my Maria will prevent me from rashly hazarding my life. Adieu. The drum chides my delay. Heaven preserve you. Ever your's,

EDWARD SOMNERS."

"This paper I bedewed with my tears: for some time I continued in a state of racking uncertainty, 'till I was roused from my lethargic grief by the sound of victory. A momentary hope possessed my heart that my Edward might have escaped the fury of the battle. While I waited with anxious expectation, a servant of the Colonel's entered the room. I read the horror of my fate in his countenance; but was unable to speak. "Oh, Madam, said he, my dear master is killed." Frantic with grief, I left the house, and flew towards the field of battle. I met the body of my Edward born by four of his men. This sight had nearly robbed me of my reason; I rushed forward not knowing what I did, and was presently surrounded by the French, who bore me to their general's tent. Cut to the soul for the irreparable loss I had sustained, I felt not this new misfortune; I cared not what became of me. The people about me behaved with great humanity. Bereft of happiness, I enquired not the fate of England. I knew myself a prisoner;

soner; but that knowledge gave me no uneasiness; I was dead to every sensation but grief! I could not think of the horrid fate of my adored Somners without distraction. When I had been in the French camp four days, I was visited by a gentleman of an elegant deportment: He informed me, he was General of the French army, and was much concerned at my misfortunes. Assured me, I should meet with every indulgence while I continued in their possession. I thanked him for the humanity of his conduct; and told him, life was a matter of indifference to me, as I was deprived of happiness. The Count de Clairville (for it was him) sympathised in my misery, and strove to abate my grief by every friendly and humane endeavour. From this nobleman I received numberless civilities during the time I was prisoner in his tent. I found in his friendship a solace to my affliction. He treated me with the most flattering distinction, and lamented my dear Somners with a degree of feeling I little expected to find in an enemy. The peace was some time concluding, which obliged me to receive many obligations from the Count. As I had left my former residence so precipitately, I was entirely without money or necessaries; these in the most delicate manner he supplied me with: By his means I was provided with mourning and every thing I wanted. When I had been with him for some time, and he saw no probability of a speedy conclusion

clusion with England, he proposed to me retiring into a nunnery. "I have a friend, madam, said he, that is the superior of a Convent, she is a very worthy and sensible woman; and if you will give me leave I will introduce you to her; I am certain it will be more agreeable to you than being in a camp." I thanked him, and readily acquiesced in his proposal, at the same time telling him I hoped it would some time be in my power to repay him for all the trouble and expence I had occasioned him: he made me a very polite answer; and said, he would immediately send to prepare the Abbess of St. Catherine's for my reception; soon after this he informed me he would attend me whenever it was agreeable to Paris. We immediately set out and was received by the Abbess of * * * *, with the utmost affection; the Count informed her who I was, and what occasioned me to be there. She deplored my misery; and assured me, she would do every thing in her power to render me happy. Before the Count took his leave, he begged to speak a few words to me alone; the Abbess immediately retired and left us together. I returned him my thanks for his generous behaviour, and assured him nothing could obliterate it from my memory. "While I have life, my Lord, continued I, I shall remember your uncommon kindness; how few would have been capable of such a disinterested conduct! My obligations are unreturnable

returnable, and tho' my heart is dead to almost every sensation, it is still alive to gratitude." "Say not a word of obligations, madam, answered he, you owe me nothing; if I have contributed to your satisfaction, it is a sufficient return; I rejoice that I had it in my power to testify my veneration for worth like yours, tho' I deplore the hard destiny of so amiable a lady: the goodness of your disposition, madam, induces me to hope the request I am about to make will be granted; it is no more than to obtain your permission for beholding you when the tumults of the war are over." "I shall ever rejoice to see my benefactor, my Lord, replied I, and should have made the request if you had not." "I cannot express to you, madam, how much I am delighted with your goodness." He respectfully kissed my hand: "I shall avail myself of the privilege you have given me, and wait on you the first opportunity; in the mean time give me leave to beg your acceptance of this trifle, (presenting me a purse) you may want money. If this should not be sufficient, favour me with a line and you shall be supplied with any sum you please to name."---"I was much affected with this generosity, and expressed my acknowledgments in broken and incoherent sentences.-- The Count observed my emotion, and politely took his leave, begging me to be composed, and not regard a matter so unimportant. When
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he was gone, the Abbess came to me and strove by every kind endeavour to amuse my melancholy. She shewed me the house and gardens, introduced me to the Nuns, many of whom were very agreeable. She represented the fault of an over-indulgence of melancholy, and entreated me to be resigned to the dispensations of providence. I could not answer her arguments; but still my heart was the prey of sorrow. When I had been in the Convent for some time, I began to be more resigned, though I still regretted my Edward with real concern; yet I was not so miserable as before I came there: this the Abbess observed with pleasure, and encouraged as much as possible the frame of mind I had obtained.---I constantly attended their mass, and though I was a strict protestant, and am so now, I had no objection to their worship, except in a few particulars, and those I ever avoided. There were many amiable women in this retirement, and they unanimously strove to make me more contented with my fate. Their endeavours had the desired effect. I enjoyed a degree of composure which had been a stranger to my mind since the death of the colonel; though my grief for his loss was not abated, it was more moderate and resigned. I had got the better of that excessive sorrow which at first assailed my heart, and it settled into an habitual melancholy; the peaceful serenity which reigned in the cloister, tended to encrease

encrease this turn of mind. I wrote, my dear brother, both to you and Mrs. Somners, but received no answer, which made me very uneasy.---When I had been in the Convent a year, the Count de Clairville came to visit me; I received him as he merited, with the utmost distinction: he told me the peace with England was concluded, and I was no longer a prisoner; if I chose immediately to return to my native land, he would attend me; yet he could not suppress a wish that I would condescend to favour him with my company a little longer in France. "I have a sister, madam, said he, that would rejoice to receive you as her guest if you will honour us so far." "Certainly, my Lord answered I, you have conferred so many obligations on me, that I should be the most ungrateful of women not to grant this trifling request." The Count was transported with my compliance, and I soon after took leave of the Convent with infinite regret, and with him set forward for his country seat, which was a considerable distance from Paris. His sister received us with infinite good nature and politeness; her behaviour to me was captivating to a degree; nothing that she thought might tend to amuse me was omitted; the situation of this noble mansion was delightful; every beauty of creation surrounded it, which, joined to the endeavours of the amiable inhabitants, made my time pass very pleasingly. When I had been some months

months at this house, I observed the Count grew melancholy. I mentioned it to his sister: she said, it was an observation she had made herself with infinite concern, and had in vain sought to find out the cause of it---this dejection continued to encrease; the advice of several physicians was asked, but his disorder baffled their skill; they in general thought it a consumption. The decline of this amiable man gave me real concern; I sought to do him every good office in my power, as a small return for what he had lavished on me: the desire I shewed to oblige him appeared to give him infinite satisfaction, which determined me not to return to England at the time I proposed. I informed Madam de Clairville of my intention, with which she was delighted, and thanked me for the regard I shewed to her brother's happiness. I wrote again to you, and hoped to have had an answer, but none ever reached my hands---The Count continued ill, though no one could find out his complaint. One day as I was entreating him to have some regard for his health, he answered with the utmost dejection, he did not wish for life. This declaration shocked me, and I expressed my concern at his despondency with the sincerity of friendship: my expressions seemed to animate him; "and do you, Mrs. Somners, said he, wish for my life? if I thought so, I would endeavour to live." "Why, my Lord, should you
imagine

Imagine the contrary, answered I, have I not reason to wish your welfare?" Encouraged by these words, he discovered the cause of his uneasiness; acknowledged he had long loved me with the utmost violence: he concluded with offering me his hand and fortune; conjured me in the tenderest manner not to be offended nor withdraw myself from his house, as either circumstance would inevitably bring him to the grave. Thunder-struck at a declaration so unexpected, I was unable to answer for some moments. "Alas! my Lord, said I, what can I say to your generous proposal? I have no words to express my feelings; but your request is of a nature that I can never grant; my heart is dead to love. Your merit deserves the warmest return of affection, and that is not in my power to give you. Colonel Somners was the only man that ever excited tender emotions in my bosom; and no other will ever possess my heart." "Ah! charming Maria, replied he, this answer I dreaded. I knew your affection for Colonel Somners; and I was convinced, wretched Clairville was doomed to misery: but I am content; death will soon end my sorrows; and I shall no longer disturb your quiet." He spoke with the utmost dejection. Before I could answer, his sister came into the room: she saw we were engaged in a particular conversation, and begged to know what it was: her brother informed her, at the same time entreated her intercession in

his favour. "If you wish me to live, my dear Teresa, said he, move that lovely woman to pity me: she is the cause of my misery." For several weeks I withstood their united persuasions; wearied at length, the Count promised to resign his own wishes to make me happy. He no longer mentioned his passion; but his health daily grew worse, and his physicians gave him over. Madam de Clairville begged I would preserve her brother's life, and save her from distraction: overcome by her affection for him, she threw herself at my feet, and vowed she would never rise till I consented to be his wife. I was unable to withstand her pleadings, and promised to give my hand to the Count: her joy was now as extravagant as her grief had been before: she called me the preserver of her happiness; and flew with tender expedition to inform the Count of her success. You may imagine the effect her information had on him: from that hour he mended; and in a few weeks was perfectly recovered. His behaviour to me was a series of passionate fondness. I had consented to give him my hand, yet my heart regarded him only as a friend: I felt a repugnance at the thought of being his wife, though I expressed it not: the idea of my beloved Somners arose to my imagination, and I wept continually when I was alone. A day was fixed, and we were married. No words can convey to you the joy of the Count, nor my melancholy, which in justice to his affection

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I concealed as much as was in my power. He generously endeavoured to remove my dejection by indulging every wish. Sometimes he would talk of my Edward, and praise his exalted character. This generous conduct effectually excited my gratitude, and my behaviour was such as gave him entire satisfaction. In compliance to my desire, he resigned the command of the French army. I again wrote letters to England, but never received any answer. I would have come to my native land to seek you and Mrs. Somners, had not the Count entreated I would not, as he could not accompany me, being obliged to go into Turkey to see a relation who had brought him up. As I found my intention made him miserable, I resigned all thoughts of it, and with my husband quitted France for Constantinople. When he had been there some months, Madam de Clairville suddenly died of a fever. The Count joined me in lamenting this amiable woman. Soon after her dissolution, we left the dominions of the Grand Signior, and set out for Italy, where we remained during the remainder of the Count's life. When we had been in Italy eight years, I accidentally met with a gentleman I had formerly known in England: he informed me, both you and my sister had been dead some time, and had left an infant daughter under the guardianship of Sir Edward Belville. This information gave me the most heart-rending distress: the Count strove to alleviate my sorrow

in the tenderest manner: we visited almost every place in Italy and Germany which was worthy observation, as he thought change of scene might dispel the gloom which oppressed my spirits. Convinced of your death, I gave up all thoughts of returning to England, and never after wrote to any person in it. I would have forgot the very name, had it been possible; but my memory dwelt with pensive pleasure on the happiness I experienced, before I quitted that once loved spot. Nothing very material happened after this, during the life of my husband. For many years his health was in a terrible state: I attended him with the most unwearied diligence, and sincerely lamented his death, which happened two years ago. His love existed to his expiring moment with the same fervency I had ever known it. His uncommon affection induced him to leave me the whole of his immense fortune. As I was now released from every tie which before detained me in France, I determined to dispose of my landed property, and return to England: but, in respect to the memory of the Count, I resolved to spend the year of my mourning in the Convent of Saint Catharine: after settling my affairs, thither I went. The abbess, who really loved me, was happy at my return, and endeavoured to persuade me to continue in France: but I was determined to return to England, in hopes of finding your daughter. Thus was I situated, when one day Madam de Reviers told me

me she expected a lady at the convent. When she came, her features struck me with wonder; so similar were they to Elvira's: when I heard her name, I no longer doubted, but knew she was my niece. I could not hide my emotions at the discovery: but I determined to conceal my affinity from Louisa, and under the character of friendship engage her confidence. For this purpose I desired the abbess not to give the least hint that might discover who I was; as she was the only person who knew the circumstances of my former life.---I have the satisfaction to find in the niece of my ever regretted Edward, the best and most accomplished of her sex. This circumstance gives me all the pleasure my heart is capable of receiving, as I shall now bestow my fortune on the relation of him I truly loved."

Here the Countess ceased speaking, and received the thanks of the whole company. As she was very much affected with the repetition of her misfortunes, she arose, and said she would retire. When she was gone, my father and the old Marquis left the room together. "I find, charming Louisa, said the Marquis, I am not the only one made unhappy by love; and I must learn to bear my fate. The relation you have given me of Miss Belville's trials, joined to what the Countess has just told us, makes me almost ashamed of myself; and I will try to bear my disappointment better." "This determination

makes me infinitely happy, my Lord, answered I; to hear you have entirely got the better of this fatal prepossession, will take a heavy load from my heart." "Alas! adorable Louisa, said he, I fear the task will be too much for me to undertake; my love is interwoven with my existence, nor shall I ever conquer it while I live." I strove to argue him out of that idea, but in vain: however, I have great hopes from time; the Marquis is of a very susceptible nature, and may meet with some lady more worthy, who will engage his heart, and make him forget thy Louisa: sincerely do I wish it: I have no allay to my happiness but him. I must break off, my Adeline; an opportunity offers of conveying this to England, where I shall soon follow it. My father and the Countess are impatient to return; and you will imagine I oppose not their desire: a short time will bring me to the arms of love and friendship; and then adieu to France, I hope for ever. I dread the parting with poor De Reviere: heaven restore his tranquility, and I have nothing more to wish. Ah, my Adeline, how do I anticipate the pleasure of seeing you! I have not time to write my happiness to Fremer. Read him this letter, and make him, who is the partner of my heart, sharer in my joy. Adieu, my dearest Adeline; my next greeting will be in person; till which time I am your gratefully affectionate

LOUISA SOMNERS.

Miss

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Portman-square.

I Send you, my beloved Lady Thompson, the last letter of Miss Somners's. At length her troubles are over, and she has a prospect of happiness. May nothing intervene to make her again uneasy! but the uncertainty of temporal things is such, that I never depend on any thing: I have depended too fatally for my peace; but no more of that. I enclosed her letter in a note to Freemer: He came to Portman-square yesterday evening, and seemed entirely absorbed in the sweet delusion of happiness. He has revealed his attachment to Sir Richard, who was delighted to find Miss Somners was likely to have a good fortune, and congratulated him on his happiness sincerely. That money should thus engross a human being, how strange, my Harriet! Sir Richard never enquired either about the person or accomplishments of Miss Somners; that she had the prospect of a large fortune, satisfied him, and he cared for nothing else. Mrs. Evelin is polite enough to say she dreads the return of my guardian, as it will deprive her of my company. I am under many obligations to her family, particularly to Sir Harry: we never pass a day without seeing him; he is for ever forming little plans that he imagines may be

agreeable to me. Charlotte Duncannon will insist he is influenced by more than friendship; but I am certain to the contrary. By the way, she dreads the arrival of Miss Somners, as she must perform her promise to the Colonel, who is elated to a degree. When I told her of the happy conclusion of Louisa's troubles, he was present: "Then, my beloved Charlotte, said he, rising and taking her hand, my probation is nearly over by your own appointment." "Not if you give yourself airs, I can assure you, George, said she with confusion: true, I promised to marry you some time, but I will not be hurried." Her mother and myself were entirely on the Colonel's side; and at last we brought her to abide by the promise she had made to give her hand to Medway, when Louisa does her's to Freemer. The happiness of George is not to be described: he is more tender in his behaviour to her than before. This appears to have some effect on Miss Duncannon; and though she will not acknowledge it, I believe she is not displeased that the form of fixing a day is over. I never saw a family more rejoiced in my life than theirs on this occasion. The Colonel has wrote to Sir William, whom they expect in town very soon. Charlotte behaves rather better, but still too lively: however, her lover makes no complaints: I hope they will be happy; they are both possessed of requisites for it, if they do not abuse them. I have no apprehension, but from the

gaiety of her disposition, which I hope her love for Medway will regulate. I am impatient for the return of my Louisa. I find the servants have orders to prepare the house in Grosvenor's-square for their reception; therefore I should imagine they will soon be here; for which reason I have excused myself from going with Mrs. Evelin's family to Myrtle Grove, where they intended to be the week after this, tho' in compliment to me, they have deferred their journey 'till the arrival of Mr. Somners. Sir Harry expresses great concern that I intended leaving his sister's house, tho' he hopes to have permission to visit me in Grosvenor's-square: I answered, I should ever be glad to see him, and he appeared perfectly satisfied. Adieu, my dearest Harriet. Present my love to Sir James, your mother, and Mr. Mortimer; and believe me your's sincerely,

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Miss DUNCANNON to Mrs. AIMWORTH.

Bloomsbury Square.

AT last, my dear Caroline, the fate of thy unfortunate Charlotte is inevitably fixed, and she is doomed to move in the narrow contracted sphere of matrimony; what I myself planned as a preventive has turned out against me, and nothing but a violation of my word can extricate me from the snare--in plain terms, Miss

Somners is now on her voyage to England, and for the purpose of giving her hand to Captain Freemer; that fatal period I fixed for receiving bondage, thinking it would never arrive, and am fairly caught in my own trap; the whole house rings with my folly: not a soul have I seen for these three days but wishes me joy.---Oh, heavens, sister, I am almost worried to death with congratulations; let me beseech you and Mr. Aimworth to spare me this form, and if you must say any thing, let it be to condole with me. As to George, he has lost all kind of respect, and addresses me in the familiar stile of a husband already. I swear I have not heard him call me Miss Duncannon since the day was thought on; it is always my love, or my dear girl; nay, sometimes---I can hardly repeat his rudeness, plain Charlotte! I have complained to Miss Belville of this intolerable freedom; she only laughs at me, and by that means encourages the wretch in his impudence; upon my word there is no enduring his triumph, which he calls happiness; but I think it favours more of insult; though, to say the truth, I believe he would behave better was it not for Adeline and Sir Edward; they make him believe he does right, and the creature is so insufferably vain, he credits every word they say; fortunately Lord Arundel is now absent, or I never should be able to support their united insolence---I
dread

dread his return; however I must prepare my spirits for a fiery engagement. Unknown to me they wrote to Sir William Medway; the Baronet answered the letter in person. I was surprised by his sudden appearance yesterday in my dressing-room without any previous information; upon my asking the reason, I was not informed Sir William was in the house: the servant replied, "the Colonel, madam, said it was unnecessary"---this circumstance offended me greatly, though I commanded my temper very well, and received Sir William with affection.--"My beloved Charlotte, said George, (in answer to my speech addressed to his uncle) Sir William is come to thank you for making me happy." "Does your uncle need one to proclaim his business, Sir? answered I, you really execute the office extremely well." "Come, come, said Sir William, we will have no falling-out now; I am indeed come to thank you for making me happy as well as my nephew, which I do heartily; and though my gout is now very bad, I would not have omitted this civility to have been free from it a whole year." The manner in which these words were pronounced, entirely banished my ill humour for the behaviour of Medway, and I told Sir William I was infinitely happy to have given him satisfaction. "Satisfaction, my dear girl, is too poor a word; I never have

have known such joy since the birth of this young soldier, and never shall again till the birth of your son." I looked down, and blushed a little, I believe;" " nay, said he, forgive me, madam, I would not offend you for the world ; I am a strange old fellow to be sure ; but you must be r with my oddities." " Make no apologies, my dear Sir, answered I, you have a right to say what you please"---Medway seemed delighted with my behaviour to his uncle, who is most extravagantly fond of me. When my mother came in, they began to talk of settlements and estates---Shocked at such horrid themes I left the room. You cannot imagine, Caroline, how I am altered, my spirits are fled, and I am just such a hum-drum creature as Medway. To add to my misery, since I engaged to give my hand, I have had an offer from a Lord ; never was there so unlucky a being in the world ! 'tis true his Lordship was rather involved, and had too great a *tendre* for the turf: these objections would have sunk before the sound of " my Lady ;" but I was engaged, and obliged to resign the delightful title for the plain vulgar appellation of " Mrs." Oh, my horrid, unfortunate stars ! I vow, Caroline, the reflection of what I have lost is too much for me, and I am quite in the vapours, as my letter will prove. I can write no more, so much does the mortifying idea affect

affect my spirits. Adieu : my mother, Miss Belville and Medway, join in love to you and Mr. Aimworth, with your ever affectionate

CHARLOTTE DUNCANNON.

Lady THOMPSON to Miss BELVILLE.

Elm Wood.

IN return for the agreeable news your last contained, I will begin this with the joyful event of Emilia's marriage with the deserving Arthur; yes, my Adeline, they were yesterday united; our family with that of Ashley Park were present at the ceremony, which was performed by Mr. Nelson: we spent a very agreeable day; Sir Robert is delighted with his daughter: I need not say any thing of Harry's happiness, you will believe that was very great. Emilia looked extremely well, and behaved with more resolution than your Harriet on a similar occasion. After dinner, when the health of the bride had been drank, Sir James ventured to mention to Mrs. Sydley the name of her other daughter, and hinted a reconciliation; she would not hear of it, and vowed never to forgive her. The good-natured Emilia pleaded for her with sisterly regard, tho' in vain; her mother remained inexorable, and seems to hate her now as much as she loved her before. Mrs. Arthur however is benefited by it; she treats her

her with great affection: the whole family will soon leave Trout Hall, to spend some time at Mr. Sydley's seat in Somersetshire. I am sorry for it; Emilia would have been a very agreeable neighbour to me while I staid at Elm-wood: but we cannot have every thing just as we wish. I congratulate you, my amiable Miss Belville, on the return of Louisa: I enjoy the idea of again being happy in her pleasing society. Adieu, my beloved girl. Believe me to be, with the tenderest regard, your sincerely affectionate

HARRIET THOMPSON.

Sir HARRY EVELIN to Captain MONTAGUE.

Berners Street.

I Have again, Montague, incurred the displeasure of Miss Belyille; the particulars are as follow: I informed you, Mr. Somners's family was expected, and that Adeline proposed leaving Portman-square when they arrived in England. This circumstance really gave me infinite pain, as I feared, my opportunities of seeing her would be less frequent. The other morning, as I was sitting alone with her, I expressed my concern on this head, in the most forcible language my feelings could suggest. She answered me with her accustomed sweetness, "that she should be ever happy to receive me at the house of Mr. Som-

Somners." Elated with the mildness of her accent, and the kindness of her deportment for some time past, I like a fool imagined her former aversion to love was conquered, and again ventured to mention my passion. I saw her lovely countenance over-clouded: however, as I had begun, I resolved to go through; and strove to move her pity with all the eloquence I was master of. When I had ceased speaking, "Sir Harry Evelin, said she, this is indeed cruel: you know how I am pained by this discourse, and therefore it is inexcusable. How often must I declare to you I never will marry? I had pleased myself with the idea that you had entirely conquered your former regard, and was seriously my friend; but I find to the contrary." "Pardon me, madam, said I, interrupting her; no man breathing ever loved like me; I could no longer confine it to my own breast. Think, Adeline, what I have suffered in obeying your hard commands, and pity me. Let me hope you will regard my passion with a degree of complacency; it cannot be restrained, but will find words. How unjust is this aversion to marriage, my charming Miss Belville! it cannot benefit Mr. Grenville: why will you then devote your youth and beauty a sacrifice to grief?" While I spoke, the blood rose in her fair cheek; her eye shone with indignation for a moment, but soon was moistened with a tear. I saw she was distressed, and could have cursed my folly. "Sir Harry,

Harry, said she, laying her hand on her stays, you have pained this oppressed heart acutely. True, I cannot benefit my Augustus by the resolution I have made; I cannot call him from the shades of death; but I can preserve myself from greater misery than heaven has laid upon me. My love and faith were his, and his alone; nor would I violate them, to become the empress of the globe. But telling you so, is of no effect; you observe nothing but your own inclinations, nor hesitate to shock me in the tenderest point." She leaned her head on her hand with emotion, and wiped her eyes. I threw myself at her feet, "forgive me, Miss Belville; by all that is sacred, I will not again distress you. My present fatal violation of the promise I made you was owing to the violence of my passion. But I will not again infringe your commands; by heavens I will not. Never while you stay in this house shall you again hear the name of love from my lips; and, if you will permit me to see you at Mr. Somners's, I engage the same. I never will rise, Madam, till you pronounce my pardon." "Rise then, answered she; again we are friends. Why will you thus oblige me to forget the many obligations I have received from you? how often have I in the character of a friend told you my heart still bleeds for the death of Mr. Grenville; that its dearest affections are buried in his tomb? yet you will not cease to address me on a subject you know I detest."

Again

Again I repeated my penitence for what I had said, and we parted tolerably reconciled; though I find she does not treat me with that captivating openness she used to do: this makes me miserable. I love her, Montague, almost to madness; and some way she must be mine: I know it will never be with her own consent: therefore I must not be scrupulous, but force her to be happy. All my art must be exerted to convince her I am really sorry for having offended her: she is so amiably soft and gentle, that if she thinks my contrition sincere, she will behave with her usual mildness. You shall hear when my grand scheme is ready; but till then you must suspend your curiosity. I am concerned to find Emilia is worse: though my thoughts are so entirely engaged by Miss Belville, that I can hardly reflect on any thing besides. I send you a bank note for her use; if you want more, let me know. When Adeline has left this house, I shall go down to Rushbrook Castle. Fanny has wrote me several letters: she is tired of being alone; and poor Harris does not meet her approbation: the fellow is down in the mouth about it. However, I encourage him to hope time may do great things for him. He is really in love with the girl; and I think Miss Smyth cannot do better. I shall bring it about when I am there. Let me hear from you soon. I hope your next will say Miss Ayscough is better.

HENRY EVELIN.

Sir

Sir JAMES THOMPSON to Captain FREEMER.

Elm-wood.

FROM the bottom of my heart I congratulate you, Charles, on your happiness. Do you not blush for your former despondency? I think you ought. I suppose your Louisa will soon arrive in England: I am all impatience to see her: she must be something extraordinary, to have inspired you with love: however, I must wait to behold the fair one. I have promised to stay the whole summer at Elm-wood, and never will be worse than my word to Lady Thompson. I can see my gentle Harriet dreads the separation from Mrs. Abinton at this distance: I have not taken the least notice of it to her, as she seems to wish it concealed. I wonder not that she should be uneasy at leaving her, never having been absent from her kind protection: joined to her being her mother, she is a most agreeable friend and companion. I shall feel infinite regret in parting with her myself, and can imagine my Harriet's sensations. At last Arthur is happy with his Emilia: they have been married a week. That strange old woman, Mrs. Sydley, is doatingly fond of them now; they all go next Monday for her house. By the way, I am not sorry Miss Arthur is going to leave this part of the world. My virtue is certainly in danger: her advances
are

are very plain: and I am never backward in understanding the ladies. The other day at Ashley-park we had the most entertaining adventure; I can hardly write it without laughing: the Arthur family was on a visit to my aunt's; Mrs. Abinton, Lady Thompson and myself were likewise there. In the evening we all rambled into the park, and separated in parties: chance, and chance only on my part, led me near Miss Arthur: we walked together some time, till we lost sight of the company, when coming to a bench I asked my companion to sit down. We had not been long in that situation, before the lady observed she wished to walk in a grove at the extremity of the park. Gallantry obliged me to offer my attendance, which was accepted. Thither we went; and after tiring ourselves we sat down at the foot of a tree, and listened to the harmonious warblings of a nightingale near us; the moon was rising, and hardly peeped above the trees, which were gently agitated by the wanton zephyrs; a small stream that runs through the grove disturbed its stillness, and altogether it was most aptly calculated for love. I talked to the fair one in a brisk style, and had placed one arm round her waist, while the other hand held her's, when we were suddenly surprized by my wife and Miss Betty Thompson: the latter caught a glance of us before I could arise, and exclaimed, "Mighty fine, Sir James; what, you are already tired of Lady Thompson's beauty,
and

and must endeavour to seduce modest women! I always thought you so, madam, continued she, to Miss Arthur; though it is not very consistent with modesty to be caught in this situation with the husband of another woman." "What situation, madam? repeated the other with violence; I do not know what you mean." "Mean, Miss Arthur! answered my aunt; why, you would draw my nephew into an intrigue, and make the most amiable of her sex miserable: as for him, he does not deserve the love of such a woman, if he can take up with you." This indignity was not to be supported. The lady turned to me, and with tears insisted I should discover what had passed. I was unable to obey for laughing: so leaned against a tree, and suffered the disputants to go on without interruption. My Harriet stepped up to me, and in her gentle manner asked what was the matter, with a look of surprize, as she had not observed us. I told her all the circumstance; and she joined me in laughing at the violence of Miss Betty on such a trifle. I proposed to leave the ladies sily; she consented: and taking the beloved of my heart by the hand, I led her from the grove. In our way we met Arthur and Sydley, who were coming to seek us: to them we related what happened; and all together returned to the guilty spot, where stood the two ladies in high debate, each loading the other with no very genteel epithets. Sydley walked to them, and took Miss Arthur by the arm:

"Come,

“Come, come, madam, said he, never mind if you and Sir James have been romping; numbers have done the same; and as long as his wife was not here, no harm has happened: keep your own counsel, and he will not tell I will answer for it.” “Sir, said she with infinite rage, I scorn your insinuations: nothing has passed between Sir James and me that I am ashamed to relate.” “Oh, I beg your pardon, madam, answered he with a penitent look, I thought your amour was of long standing.” This speech set Miss Betty a laughing; and with infinite difficulty we cleared up the whole circumstance, and established peace between the offended parties. By mutual consent we agreed the matter should remain a secret; and so it has done for me, I assure you. Sometimes when I offend Miss Betty, she gives a broad hint concerning it, but that is of no consequence. If it was not for her sourness now and then, my life would be one continued round of delight. My dear Harriet is so infinitely charming, that I am fonder of her than ever: she is the favourite of all my aunts, and arbitress in every dispute; yet she never offends any of them. Mr. Mortimer is as fond of her, as he would be of his own child. Every one who knows her, admires and reveres her virtues. Adieu. Let me know when Miss Sommers is safe in England, and the reception her father gives you; if that is as you wish, your happiness will be equal to your devoted

JAMES THOMPSON.

Miss

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-Square.

THE family of Mr. Somners are arrived, my dear Harriet; they came yesterday. As I was sitting at dinner a servant brought me a note from Louisa, begging to see me immediately; I apologised to Mr. and Mrs. Evelin for my abrupt departure; telling them the reason, they readily excused me, and taking a hasty leave I stepped into Mr. Somners's coach, and ordered them to drive home directly; they obeyed, and I was presently at the door. Without waiting for the step being let down I jumped out, and was instantly in the arms of Mr. Somners. "My Adeline, said he, how happy I am to see you!" I then flew to Louisa; we continued a moment silent. "Ah! my friend at last! said she, I hope never again to part with you; what various circumstances have happened since we left this house!" "Come, come, said my beloved guardian, interrupting her, talk not of that now my dear, let me introduce Miss Belville to my sister: but why, Adeline, do you appear in mourning?" I told him, and advanced to the Countess, whom I had not before observed: she rose to receive me. "I hear you have been marked out for peculiar misfortunes, charming Miss Belville, said she; will you suffer a woman,

man, who has not been free from troubles, to aspire to your friendship?" I respectfully took her hand and put it to my lips; "I am no stranger to the life of the Countess of Clairville, answered I, and shall regard her friendship both as an honour and happiness." "Amiable girl, replied she, you have already obtained it." We then talked on general topics, in all which the Countess displayed a sound judgment, and extensive knowledge; I expected to see a fine woman; but not so handsome a one as I found. Though her countenance is now marked with trouble, there is yet the remains of perfect beauty; her person is tall and elegant, the most agreeable manner accompanies all her words that ever I met with; she is indeed a charming woman. Louisa enquired particularly after you; I told her your happiness, in which she heartily rejoices: Mr. Somners asked the account of my uncle's death, which pained me to dwell on; however to satisfy him I went through it: he congratulated me on the fortune he had left, as did my Louisa. The health of my guardian is perfectly established; I never saw him look better, and his spirits likewise are much mended. In the evening Louisa and I retired to the same chamber, after having attended the Countess to her's; I asked in what manner she took leave of the Marquis?" "Ah, my Adeline, said she weeping, I can hardly tell you; I suffered much in parting
with

with him, and had it not been absolutely by force, they never would have dragged him from me. He bore up tolerably till a little before the carriage arrived that was to convey us from Montpelier: he begged me to come into the garden; I could not refuse him, and gave him my hand. "Ah Miss Somners, said he, now our separation is so very nigh, I find my resolution is fled, I cannot survive your departure Louisa, I shall never again behold you; may Heaven preserve you, loveliest of women: you will soon hear of the termination of my existence; perhaps for a moment you may forget your beloved Freemer, and give a sigh to my memory. I feel I cannot live without you." He folded his arms in despair, the big tears stood trembling in his eyes, while his bosom heaved with convulsive emotion; I stood weeping by him unable to speak. "Beloved of my heart, said he, I distress you; forgive me, Louisa, I will no longer pain you; but, oh! I never can bid you adieu!" "Think not I am going, my Lord, said I, we shall quickly meet again: you have promised to see me in England, and will not break your word; in the mean time accept this trifle as a mark of my esteem." I gave him a ring with my hair worked in it, and set with diamonds: he dropt on one knee---"never, my Louisa, said he, shall this valuable present be taken from me; ten thousand thanks, my beloved girl. This little circum-

circumstance has given my heart a pleasing sensation in the midst of its agony!" He kissed my hand and arose; the Countess came to tell me they waited for me; the Marquis turned pale and caught hold of me. "I must not lose her yet, madam, said he, with wildness; I cannot part with her." "Be composed, my Lord, answered my aunt, Louisa must go, you know she must; therefore you had better part without farther leave." "Well, if she must, answered he, sighing, I am the veriest wretch on earth. Adieu, beloved Louisa, may every good angel guard you." He clasped me in his arms, and wetted my cheek with his tears; mine streamed like torrents: the Countess was so affected, she turned from us to hide her concern. We were silent a minute; my father and the old Marquis joined us; they both endeavoured to comfort De Reviere, who regarded not what they said, but stood by the Countess with his eyes intently fixed on me; his father advanced and took my hand. "Farewel, Miss Sommers, said he, I shall rejoice to hear of your happiness, tho' we could not contribute to it." I only bowed, and faltered out something of thanks for his behaviour since we had been his guests. Madam de Belfleur then bid me adieu with tenderness, saying, she never was so concerned to part with any body in her life: my father made a motion to go. Once more I advanced to the Marquis, and held out my hand to him; "adieu,

my Lord, said I; may the Almighty preserve you and restore your tranquillity: I shall ever regard you with the affection of a sister." He caught my hand with violence. "Louisa, said he, dearest Louisa, you shall not go, by heaven you shall not! I will not thus yield you up tamely, no person on earth shall force you from me." In vain every person present persuaded him; he would not let me go; at last, finding every method fruitless, they forced me from him, and carried me almost senseless to the coach, where my father and the Countess soon followed me. We were soon on board the ship, which not failing immediately, my father dispatched a messenger to enquire after the Marquis; he returned with a letter from his father, wherein he said, he flatters himself time may reconcile his son to my loss; tho' then he was very indifferent, yet he hoped better than might be expected from his violent agitations; he concluded with wishing us a safe return to England, and continual happiness; he assured my father when the Marquis had sufficiently conquered his partiality, he would himself attend him to England. This letter was a great alleviation to my concern, and I rejoiced that this dreadful parting was over. You cannot imagine, my Adeline, how much I have suffered on his account." She ceased and wiped the tears that flowed down her cheeks. "I know well, my dear friend, answered I, you have gone through a great

a great deal, and sincerely have I sympathized with you; but now turn your thoughts to more pleasing prospects; Captain Freemer will be happier than I can describe to find you returned; I suppose you set out soon after your last letter?" "I did, replied she; the joy of Freemer in meeting me, cannot exceed mine, let it be ever so great." The return of my Louisa has newly animated me; you would hardly believe I was the same person, my amiable Lady Thompson, such an alteration has it made in my spirits. Louisa joins me in love to you,

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Miss SOMNERS to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-Square.

THE first moment I can command I set down to wish my beloved Harriet every happiness in her present state: I knew not of your marriage till my arrival in England, or should have done it before. I find by Captain Freemer, Sir James is his particular friend; this circumstance doubly endears him to me, and I hope to behold him very soon; nor am I less impatient to see my dear Lady Thompson: Our separation has been very tedious and much has happened to both. You are informed of what has befallen me by Adeline: I flatter myself all my difficulties are over, and the rest of my life

will be calm and unruffled. Could I behold Miss Belville happy, I have no other wish to form; but though she strives to be chearful, I see her heart is oppressed; notwithstanding her sorrow, she is if possible more lovely than when I left her. She has recovered her former beautiful colour, which was a little damped with grief, like a rose whose delicate hue appears fainter under the dew-drops that hang thick on its leaves; but when the sun chases the evening tears from its surface, again blooms forth more glowing than before: thus is it with my Adeline; when I left her, the constant meditation on her loss had deadened the roseat hue of her cheek, which time has effectually restored. Though her beauty shines again in all its lustre, it is not so with her chearfulness; still she hangs drooping over the matchless Grenville's tomb, and with the gloomy pensiveness of melancholy laments the youth she loved. I observed to her the other day, I thought she was more grave than she used to be: "Do you think so, Louisa?" answered she with a smile, I hoped I had been more chearful; I do not obstinately encourage melancholy, but rather strive to conquer it, though nature is very strong, and will sometimes exert itself. When my dear Augustus died, I lost not only the best of men and tenderest of lovers, but one that from infancy I had been used to, independent of my tender connections with him: I should have never
 ceased

ceased to lament the horrid period his virtues met; but when I think he was the man I doated on, that I beheld him stabbed to the heart; I wonder reason kept her seat; it pleased heaven to give me fortitude, and I survived this greatest of human trials: nay, not only survived it, my Louisa, but again looked up to some degree of comfort from the society of my friends, for as to happiness, it fled with Mr. Grenville, therefore you cannot wonder to behold me as I am; surely I ought to think myself highly favoured to be able to argue thus, when I have had a calamity like what I deplore; but forgive me, continued she, I should not make you a sharer in my sorrow, when your heart should be the abode of joy, though I cannot avoid acknowledging mine heavily deplores its beloved partner, and must for ever deplore him; but I will strive to hide its emotions, and in consideration of you and my Harriet, be serene if possible." She then wiped her lovely eyes and changed the discourse: she promised to introduce the Earl and Sir Edward to me. I am impatient to see them; the mention of the latter introduced a discourse on Augustus again: though Miss Belville spoke without any great expressions of grief, yet the tears that involuntarily strayed down her cheeks, sufficiently discovered the situation of her heart. Ah, my Harriet, that such an amiable creature must be unhappy! I wonder not at her concern; her

magnanimity is amazing, in concealing it from general observation as she does ; to no one but me does she suffer her feelings to express themselves, and then but seldom : my father observed to me the other day, he was rejoiced to see his Adeline had got the better of her grief in a great degree ; I contradicted not that opinion as it made him happy. I must bid you adieu, my dear Lady Thompson ; Adeline summonses me to attend her to Mr. Evelin's ; we shall call on Miss Duncannon, whom I have a great curiosity to behold. My most respectful compliments attend your mother and Sir James, and accept the affectionate wishes of

LOUISA SOMNERS.

Captain FREEMER to Sir JAMES THOMPSON.

George-Street.

AH, Thompson, I have seen my Louisa, heard her pronounce my happiness ; she will at last be mine, and over-pay me for all my misery. I cannot describe my meeting with the dear girl ; it was all extacy and rapture ; her father gave me the most cordial reception, and likewise the Countess de Clairville, who is a lovely woman : in the afternoon I brought Sir Richard to Grosvenor's Square, who is nearly as much captivated with Miss Somners as I am ; her behaviour to him was enchanting : when he re-
turned

turned home, he declared if any thing should happen to prevent our union, it would break his heart. What a change has a little time produced ! I find I owe my happiness, next to the perseverance of my Louisa, to the Countess : I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to this excellent lady. Every thing between Mr. Somners and my father is agreed upon, and a little while will make me the happy husband of my beloved Miss Somners : I am almost beside myself with joy ; I cannot write with the smallest connection : excuse me, Sir James, you have yourself experienced the same sensations as now agitate me, and therefore will make allowances for me. The day that gives me the beloved of my heart, will also bless Medway with the hand of Miss Duncannon ; it is highly entertaining to see her behaviour ; I doubt if she does not give him the slip at last ; amid my own felicity I feel for the amiable friends ; both Lord Arundel and Sir Edward are unhappy. I can commiserate their situation ; the pangs of unrequited love are indeed exquisite ; but while I am concerned for them, my heart bleeds for the beautiful Miss Belville. Louisa has told me the whole of her sad story, and I am astonished at her sufferings. Charming creature ! what has she not endured ! I little thought her refusal of such splendid offers arose from motives so great and laudable ; since I have known her former life, she appears to me something above humanity ;

manity; her behaviour is so uniformly perfect, she shares the joy that animates every countenance, and never mentions her past troubles, lest it should cast a damp over our happiness: my gentle Louisa tells me she even avoids saying any thing to her in private, but always talks on the most entertaining subjects. What an angel she is! The other day a circumstance happened that more than I can express affected me: the whole Evelin family, Mrs. Duncannon, her daughter, Colonel Medway, Lord Arundel, Sir Edward, and my father, were all at Grosvenor Square, to pass the day; nothing could exceed our happiness; the lovely Miss Belville appeared the delight and admiration of every one present; she was in good spirits, and by that means compleated our joy. After dinner, a servant told her a gentleman in boots begged leave to see her. "Ah, Adeline, said Miss Duncannon, this is some favourite country 'Squire that you see in private." "Whoever he is, Charlotte, replied she, smiling, I will certainly bring him here:" She left the room; every mouth burst forth with her praises; she was absent some time; when she returned, an elegant man followed her; "my dear Mr. Somners, said she, give me leave to introduce a beloved friend of mine; the Earl of Bromfield impatiently wishes to pay his compliments to you and Louisa." As her story was known to most of the company, every countenance was marked with

with astonishment at her behaviour, especially Mr. Somners's. After a little recollection, he advanced towards him, and shook him by the hand: "I loved your family, my Lord, said he, and am very glad to see you." The Earl returned his compliments, and welcomed him to England very politely. Miss Somners sat amazed at the scene before her, nor made the least effort to address Lord Bromfield; but kept her eyes fixed on Adeline, who arose and came to her: "Do you not speak to the brother of my Grenville, Louisa? said she; have you forgot the early attachment you had for him?" "Forgive me, Adeline, replied Miss Somners, blushing and moving towards the Earl: surprize alone kept me silent. My dear Lord Bromfield, I heartily rejoice to see you." "Ah, Louisa! said he, I know I deserve your contempt: but, if penitence for what is past ---" "Hush, my Lord, interrupted Miss Belville; I must not hear the man I know to be worthy, thus arraign himself. Pain me not by observations detrimental to yourself. You are my brother, my dearest brother, continued she, sighing; the only relation I have left." She wiped her eyes, and turned her face away a moment. "Ah, Adeline! answered the Earl, taking her hand; I feared to see you: each gentle word or kind expression you utter stabs me to the heart. I have not merited your least attention." He arose and walked to the window. "Observe, Captain Freemer, said Miss Belville, how

much his heart is oppressed. Those pangs speak him related to my amiable Grenville. Louisa, said she, we must make him easier." They both went to him, and talked for some time; then returned to their seats more calm. The Earl staid not long, as he said he was obliged to be that night at Grenville Abbey. Adeline attended him to the door, and was absent near half an hour. When she returned, her eyes were red. The whole company sighed for her; and she alone wore a smile. Ah, Thompson! this matchless woman makes me melancholy. Though I have such a prospect of happiness before me, her sorrows give an acute pang to my heart. My dear Louisa is likewise much concerned on her account; she loves her tenderly. Adieu. My best compliments attend Lady Thompson, with the love of my Louisa and Miss Belville, who both know of my writing. Your's ever,

CHARLES FREEMER.

Miss DUNCANNON to Mrs. AIMWORTH.

Bloomsbury-square.

LORD have mercy on me, Caroline, this is the last letter I shall sign with the name of Duncannon. They have agreed among themselves, (for I swear I have not consented) to make Miss Somners and me wives this day week. The Colonel begged for two hours I would fix the day; but I answered absolutely no; if they would
marry

marry me by force, I could not help it, and he must take the consequence. He urged the cruelty of my behaviour. "Why, what does it signify, said I, whether I fix the day myself, or you fix it? all the difference is, that when we quarrel, I shall not have myself to blame." And so, Caroline, Monday next makes me a bride; if it was not for the novelty of it, I think it would be a good way to hang myself, and disappoint the Colonel. I find I am not serious enough for the mistress of a family, and so I told him; but he would hear no reason. Marry I must, and he should be perfectly happy. Aye to be sure, and so shall I no doubt. Heavens defend me! I have a most horrid idea of shackles. They are busied in all manner of preparations; my mother is as blithe as a bird: for my own part I think our house resembles a cook's shop more than any thing else. I suppose they think it necessary to cram us, in order to support our spirits in thus playing the fool. There are such consultations between Miss Belville, my mother, and Mrs. Evelin, that it is enough to frighten one. I verily believe they have bought both Louisa and me clothes enough to serve seven years. Adeline has a charming taste, and takes all the trouble on herself: neither Miss Somners nor I do a single thing; she sets moping about as if she was going to be hanged (and indeed that would be better of the two evils) while I flounce up and down the house to shew my bravery. By the

the way, I have not told you how I like Louisa and her family. Why, amazingly; they are all charming people, especially the Countess, though I am a little afraid of her. I tell Mr. Somners, he ought to have exerted his authority, and forced his daughter to have married the Marquis; and then he would have done two good things at once, made her a Marchioness, and me a free woman. He has the assurance to declare he rejoices to have seen his error in time, and have preserved his child from misery. To be sure, had I been Louisa, I should have plagued him a little: but she is so soft, nothing would have forced her to retaliate. Upon my word she is very handsome, though quite contrary to Miss Belville: her stature is something higher; a good complexion for her eyes, which are dark and piercing; except Adeline's, her nose and mouth are the most beautiful I ever beheld; her hair and eye-brows very dark, the latter arched and equal for delicacy to Miss Belville's; her hand and foot remarkably pretty: in short, when her friend is absent she is far the loveliest woman I ever saw; and when they are together, the contrast is very pleasing: the softness and expression in the delicate countenance of Adeline, that enchants every beholder, detains the eye to dwell on her perfections with melancholy pleasure; and when for a moment it withdraws from the pen-sive employment, the face of Miss Somners agreeably relieves it, and entertains the beholder with
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the strongest marks of sense and sweetness. Though the persons of these ladies are entirely unlike, their manners are very similar, which I apprehend is greatly owing to the sameness of their educations. Their affection is strong; no people can be more perfect friends. Louisa frequently deplores the troubles of her Adeline to me; and that subject is ever sure to make me serious. But why, Caroline, should I say more on this unhappy theme? I need preserve my spirits for the day of my execution, not depress them. Sir William has given me a very elegant set of jewels; the honest old man is almost out of his wits for joy, that this hopeful wedding is so near: he is for ever with us, as are the Evelin, Somners, and Freemer families. The word marriage is never out of their mouths; and really I have been almost smothered with rolls of musty parchments and fussing lawyers. I verily believe, Caroline, I have put my name to five hundred bonds or something. Heartily shall I rejoice when this stuff is over, for absolutely it is intolerable. I have not been in a good humour ever since they began their preparations; nor shall I till they end them. Yesterday George brought a fine bedaubed suit of white and gold for our opinions. Every body admired it. He asked how I liked it. "Not at all," answered I. "Why so, my love, what are your objections?" "Heavens! cried I, people will imagine I have married a corporal, with that quantity of tarnished

nished gold on it." He said he would have it taken off, and so he did; which was good-natured enough. Seriously, my dear sister, the behaviour of Medway is actuated by the most violent love; and I have no fear of happiness but from my own temper. Sometimes I shall laugh at him, though my life was to be sacrificed. I hope the example of Louisa and Lady Thompson will in time make me a good sort of a wife, joined to the advice of Miss Belville, my sage mama, and my matronly sister. I am happy Sir James Thompson is not in town; he would teize me to death. The male creatures here behave tolerably: as to Lord Arundel and Sir Edward, they cannot say boo to a goose, unless Miss Belville bids them: and so I do not mind them; they serve very well to laugh at. Adeline has made Miss Somners a present of a beautiful pair of brilliant bracelets with the picture of herself and Mr. Somners. She has honoured me with a miniature of herself fastened to a diamond solitaire. I regard this mark of her affection as invaluable, and would not part with it for worlds. Adieu, my beloved sister: I wish you could be with me on the approaching occasion; but, as that cannot be, wish me courage to make the people stare at my behaviour. All here join in kindest remembrances to you and Mr. Aimworth, with your affectionate

CHARLOTTE DUNCANNON.

Miss

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-square,

TO-morrow is the day that will unite my Louisa and Miss Duncannon to their deserving lovers. I have been so continually engaged in preparations for these weddings, my dear Lady Thompson, that I have not had a single moment to myself; otherwise I should not have omitted answering your last obliging letter. I rejoice, my Harriet, that the union of persons so dear to me is likely to take place. For though a few short hours only must pass before the time arrives that will unite them, yet is there no certainty in temporal affairs. I, my beloved Lady Thompson, have reason enough to say so. However, I hope heaven has not ordained so great a trial for either of my friends as it was pleased to lay on me. I have taken leave of Mr. Evelin's family, though I hope often to see them. I mean only, I have bid adieu to the house as a residence. Both Mr. and Mrs. Evelin expressed great concern at losing me, and begged I would sometimes visit them. I have promised to pass a few days at Myrtle-grove before I go to Belville-park, where I mean to spend the greatest part of my remaining life. I mentioned my desire to Mr. Somners, and he has not the smallest objection to it. The Countess de Clairville has made me happy
by

by saying she would continue to live with her brother. I promise myself in the society of my Louisa and this amiable woman much satisfaction: soon after the marriage of the former, I believe we shall go there. Miss Duncannon insists to the contrary, and begs we will be within reach, in pity to her; for she says she shall be miserably tired of matrimony in a fortnight. She is a strange girl, though her heart is perfectly good. Since I wrote last, I have had a visit from Lord Bromfield; it was entirely unexpected, and rather surprized me. We had a great deal of company, chiefly the happy families that will soon be related. I begged he would see Mr. Somners and Louisa, and with much difficulty persuaded him. Their surprize was very great, as I had no time to inform them who was with me: and I was sorry to find they did not receive him with affection. However, I removed the gloom that clouded the countenances of my guardian and his daughter as well as I could; and they made every reparation in their power, for the coldness of their first reception. He staid not long. I attended him to the door, and endeavoured to raise his spirits, which were very low, by every tenderness in my power. I could not succeed: and he left me with expressions of concern for the folly of his former conduct. His penitence made a deep impression on my heart; and I was obliged to retire to my own apartment, before I could return to the company.

When

When I had given vent to my feelings by a copious shower of tears, and taken a melancholy look at the picture of my Augustus, I returned to the dining room. I found every countenance wore a gloom on it that gave me pain. I smiled and sought to inspire them with cheerfulness: but they were all so affected with the sight of Lord Bromfield, that joy had given place to seriousness; especially in the face of my Louisa I read the deepest anguish. She had not seen the Earl a great while, never since the day that Mr. Grenville died; and therefore it gave a shock to her gentle spirits she was not able to get the better of. I am sorry this circumstance happened just now, as it cast a damp over the innocent joy that animated the whole house. The comforts of this life are so very few, my Harriet, that I could have wished the present happiness of Mr. Somners and my Louisa to have met no alloy; but that is not in humanity to hope for. Our greatest blessings here are fleeting and uncertain, and generally dashed with poignant circumstances to imbitter our few happy moments. I know myself so well the sad sensation of sorrow, that I would guard it from those I love, were it possible. I was a good deal affected the other day with some observations of honest old William, whom I had sent on a particular commission to Belville-park. When he returned, I enquired the situation of things there. "Why, madam, said he, your tenants and those your bounty supports are

very happy with your goodness: and they would have nothing to desire, if you would come down, and let them see you." "Aye, honest William, said old farmer Morton, do persuade your lady to come down; and when I have again seen her sweet face, and blessed her for her goodness, I have nothing more to do with the world, but can lay me down in the grave by my poor old dame." I thought they would have eat me when I told them you would certainly come there some time in the summer. For as I had heard you say so, madam, I thought you would not be angry at my telling them." "Certainly not, William, answered I: I shall rejoice as much to behold those honest people, as they will to see me." "Aye, madam, never was any young lady so beloved as you are: the whole village almost cried when they talked of your bounty. Some of the young women observed what a sad thing it was, so fine a young lady should be crossed in love; and all of them agreed, no body but my dear young master could deserve their excellent lady. Indeed, madam, continued the poor fellow, wiping his eyes, I cannot help crying myself, when I think of your troubles; to see every body so happy, and you that are goodness itself, as a body may say, continually mourning. Ah! if my good master and mistress were alive, it would break their hearts to see you so sorrowful. I wish to God I could make you happy; I would die to do it. I am sure I owe every thing
I have

I have in the world to your family." "I thank you, William, said I, stifling the emotion that this plain genuine language of the heart had raised; I am far from miserable, nay, I ought to be happy with the many blessings I am favoured with. The circumstance for which I mourn was inflicted by the hand of God; and therefore I must bear it without repining. Had it pleased heaven to have spared the life of Mr. Grenville, I might have been too happy, and forgot the sufferings of my fellow creatures, and been entirely immersed in my own comforts. But now that I have myself so severely felt the stroke of adversity, I can commiserate the misfortunes of others. And as heaven has given me the means to relieve those that stand in the most need of it, in this employment I find the greatest comfort; therefore do not be uneasy on my account; I am far from unhappy." "Ah, my God, madam! I cannot stand this, replied he sobbing, to hear an infant talk so fine. Why, my good young lady, there is not a bishop in the world that could do as you do." I love this good creature, my Harriet, for his attachment, which is the most sincere I ever met with. Gratitude therefore impels me to treat him with particular distinction, which I never fail to do. Miss Duncannon, Louisa tells me, has quarrelled with the Colonel, and declares she will not marry him. I shall go and endeavour to reconcile them; therefore must lay
aside

aside my pen for some time. Your's affectionately,

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Miss BELVILLE in Continuation.

Monday Evening.

I WOULD not dispatch this letter, my dear Lady Thompson, till I could tell you the ceremony was over, and Miss Somners and Charlotte had changed their names. I have left the whole circle below rejoicing in their happiness, and stole to solitude and the employment of my pen. I feared we never should have prevailed on Miss Duncannon to go to church; the Colonel had offended her last night in some trifle, and with great difficulty she was reconciled. I was obliged to tell her I never should regard her as my friend, before she would forgive him. When Louisa and I was dressed this morning, we went to Charlotte's chamber, who slept at this house last night, and were amazed to find she was not above half dressed. "Why, Miss Duncannon, said I, you will not be ready: it is now very late." "Well, I do not care, Adeline, answered she, if I am not: and now you are come, I will not dress at all. I look such a fright by you two, that I cannot bear myself. Why, I have a hundred wrinkles in my face, I swear. Aye, that is totally Medway's fault: he made me fret till I became this hag; but I will be even with him:

him: and if he will drive to church, it shall be without me." She had her gown on, but was without her cap, which I would have placed upon her head; "no, thank you my dear, said she, I do not need that additional fright; lord! Louisa, I wish my gown had been white instead of laylock---I look, absolutely, as pale as a sheet, while you two are blooming nymphs;" in vain we intreated her to finish dressing; no, she would not be married that day, let what would be the consequence of it. The Countess and Mrs. Duncannon then entered the room, and being informed of her determination, joined their entreaties to ours; wearied with her obstinacy, her mother declared she would fetch the Colonel upstairs: accordingly she did; as soon as Charlotte saw him she seated herself in a chair, and began singing; "my dearest girl, said he, let me intreat you to make haste; my uncle is below, and waits impatiently to see you." "What, you want to make a shew of me, sir, do you? said she, but, for once, I shall disappoint you; I have altered my mind, and will not be married to-day." He threw himself at her feet, and used every intreaty he could think of; she was silent a minute, and then holding out her hand, "well, come, George, said she, I have sufficiently tried your patience, and will plague you no longer; get you down stairs, and I will follow you in a twinkling." With difficulty we forced him from her, and all set to finishing her dress, which, when completed,

pleated, was very elegant; both Louisa and her's were made exactly the same, only one white and silver, and the other laylock; they both looked charmingly; and for all Charlotte's complaint of paleness, she appeared infinitely lovely. The gentlemen met us at the bottom of the stairs; each took the hand of his bride; I gave mine to Lord Arundel, who, with Sir Edward, was present. After breakfast, the company went, in different coaches, to church, where the ceremony was performed; the ladies behaved very well, particularly Miss Duncannon. When it was over, and the Colonel advanced to salute her, she started back; but, recollecting herself, "oh, aye, said she, I am married now." The droll manner in which she spoke, caused the whole company to smile, and we returned home very happy. The day was past agreeably; Charlotte could not restrain her gaiety, but continued to laugh at the Colonel as usual; my dear Louisa was grave, rather too much so; the behaviour of both Medway and Freemer was such as I wished it. I cannot express to you, my dear Lady Thompson, how much I was delighted with Lord Arundel and Sir Edward; though their whole attention was confined to me, I heard not a word that might give me the least pain; how delicately considerate! They enquire for me, and I must bid my Harriet adieu to join the rest of my amiable friends. May both your happiness and theirs be permanent, and without alloy;

loy ; that neither may ever experience the pain of divided love, prays, from her heart, your gratefully sincere

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-Square.

I AM sorry to find, my Harriet, the illness of Sir James was the occasion of your silence, and rejoice with you that he is now recovered. We have been continually engaged in receiving visits ; and when Mrs. Fremer has not engaged me, Charlotte never omitted it. As I do not like to give any one pain, I always attended her on the shortest notice. The Countess has been very obliging to her in this respect, with whom she is a great favourite. The Colonel has taken a large house in the square, so they are very near us ; it is elegantly furnished, intirely in the modern stile. Mrs. Duncannon wished her daughter to stay with her for some time, but Charlotte would not ; she declared, all the fun of marrying was to have a house to turn out of window ; and now the whim is gratified, she told me, the other day, they might as well have staid 'till the winter ; for she cannot breathe in town, and will go down to Belmont Abbey. Sir William would have his nephew bring her to Southwell castle ; but she will have her own way, and go first to her

her mother's seat; George contradicts her in nothing; and, to say the truth, she behaves to him much better than I expected. I hope they will be happy, they are both worthy. As to Freemer and his Louisa, their lives glide on in peaceful serenity; the sun, each day, beholds them happy, the most perfect affection subsists between them; this makes the heart of my guardian intirely easy; he tells me, he has now nothing to wish but to see me well settled; he pleaded very powerfully for either the Earl or our Edward, whichever my heart most approved. I intreated him not to pain me by such conversation; and assured him, my aversion to marriage was not to be overcome; finding his perseverance gave me uneasiness, he promised to say no more on the subject. I have taken leave of Mr. and Mrs. Evelin, who are both gone to Myrtle Grove; she would not be satisfied 'till I promised soon to see her there; which I intend doing next week; my stay will not be long, for the season is so far advanced, I shall hardly have time enough to spend at Belville Park. I find Sir Harry is to be, this summer, at his sister's; he says, we must have some rural entertainment before I leave them, at which my Louisa, her father, the Countess, Sir Richard, and Captain Freemer, are to be present. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward are at Belmont Abbey, and, with that family, will likewise be with us; these gentlemen have hinted their desire, to Mrs. Medway,
or

of attending me to Belville Park; and, to oblige them, I have consented.

I congratulate you on the promise Mr. Mortimer has made; tell him, his consent to accompany you to town has given infinite satisfaction to your Adeline. I wait, impatiently, 'till the time arrives when I shall again enjoy the pleasure of his edifying conversation. You need not fear that I shall be absent from London, in the winter; my Harriet would always bring me, from any part of the globe, to see her. I am interrupted; adieu, present my respects to all my esteemed friends, and accept the sincere regard of

ADELINE BELVILLE.

P. S. Mr. Somners, Louisa, and Captain Freemer, unite in compliments to you, Sir James, and Mrs. Abinton.

Captain MONTAGUE to Sir HARRY EVELIN.

Parsonage-House.

I SHOULD have acknowledged the receipt of your last, Sir Harry, but I have had no opportunity of writing 'till now. I could not execute your injunctions, immediately, without giving suspicion to Emilia: however, by a short delay, I have managed things entirely to my satisfaction; and have the pleasure to assure you, the gloomy mansion is ready for your reception: I think this scheme must succeed; and congratulate you on the fertility of your invention: it certainly is a very bold undertaking, and what one would avoid, if possible; but, as you are situated, I blame you not. I have placed old Deborah there; you know her tried fidelity is to be depended on.

As I was absent some days, Miss Ayscough was curious to know what business called me, so suddenly, from the village. I formed a plausible excuse for my absence; and she made no more inquiry. By the way, Sir Harry, I think she is much mended; Dr. H. says, he does not regard her disorder as a regular decline; and he is of opinion, was her mind but easy, she might entirely be restored to health. His behaviour has been very friendly to her, and more like a relation than a physician.

She

She often asks me your employment; and fears she is not the only woman injured by you. I endeavour to persuade her to the contrary, but without much effect: she sometimes expresses the most anxious apprehensions for her childrens' fate in life; and declares, was she sure they would be taken care of, she could contentedly die. "I know, Captain Montague, said she, the other day, Sir Harry is involved; what, then, will become of my poor boys?" These reflections seem continually to torment her; but, excuse me, I should not write now on this subject; you have enough to think of. I will go, as you desired, down to Rusbrook Castle; though, I fear it will not be in my power to pacify Miss Smyth. Adieu, you have my hearty wishes for success. I hope, the next time I see you, to offer my congratulations to the lady; in the mean time, I am your ever devoted

THOMAS MONTAGUE.

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Myrtle-Grove.

ONCE more, my Harriet, I write from this place: I have been here three days, most of which time has been spent in the most agreeable manner. The behaviour of Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn is the most perfectly polite and friendly that can be imagined; not a day has passed unmarked by some sort of amusement: Sir Harry is generally the projector of these plans; and his taste, in the execution, is very elegant. Never did people study more to oblige than this family; and I should be very ungrateful not to be pleased with their endeavours. The inhabitants of the Abbey are generally here, or we with them. The oddity of Charlotte is a continual source of amusement to me. I am happy to see the most perfect harmony subsist between her and the Colonel; she often laughs at him, which he takes in good part; secure in her affection, he no longer wishes to check her lively temper.

I told Charlotte, the other day, she surpassed even my most sanguine wishes, in regard to her behaviour. "Why aye, Adeline, said she, I keep up appearances very well before folks; but, when we are by ourselves, I tell George what I would have him do; and, by this kind of discipline,

pline, make him tolerable tractable ; “ that is the way we manage, is it not Colonel ? ” . He kissed her hand, and replied, her commands were so gentle, he should ever rejoice to obey them. This speech caused a glow of satisfaction to animate the fair face of his Charlotte. “ Why aye, now, said she, that is something like ; how much happier are we than your sighing, dying, lovers ! we exhausted our ill-nature before marriage ; and now we are as polite as most people in the beginning of courtship ; I always told you, Miss Belville, when I plagued George, it was for the benefit of his temper ; had I not treated him as I formerly did, he would have been as great a tyrant as the rest of his sex. ” “ I hope not, my dear, ” answered the Colonel, smiling. “ Nay, don’t contradict me, Medway, said she, I know you would. ” “ Well, be it so, my Charlotte, ” replied he, with infinite good humour. “ Aye, cried she, to be sure ; when I say a thing, it must be so ; see, Adeline, continued she, laughing, how easily these soldiers are to be managed, if you set out properly. ” “ It is well for you, Charlotte, answered I, that the Colonel has so great an affection for you ; I know who makes an ill-use of their power. ” “ What, Miss Belville, replied she, is all your goodness come to this ! do you wish to make quarrels between man and wife ? but, for once, I will disappoint you ; and so, George, I will not quarrel with you. ” She then briskly turned to Sir Harry,

and asked what sort of amusement they were to have in honour of me? "Something very singular, I hope, for I hate your common-placed things as I hate bondage." This strange girl is infinitely entertaining; more so than before her marriage, I think. She acknowledged to me, when we were alone, she was perfectly happy; I rejoice in it, my Harriet, may she continue so; would I could say so much for the Earl and Sir Edward! those amiable men occasion me many a painful moment; the happiness of their lives imbittered by me. Alas, Lady Thompson, how very unfortunate that two such worthy characters should engage their hearts to the same object! one that feels their worth, but cannot, from the peculiarity of her situation, contribute to their felicity. They are both to accompany me to Belville Park; I have persuaded them to the contrary; but they would not resign their intentions.

We leave this place the day after to-morrow; there are great preparations making for to-morrow's entertainment; what it is to be, I know not; this evening I expect my guardian's family, who have promised to be present at this amusement. I shall not write again, I dare say, 'till I am at Belville Park; the idea of returning to that once delightful spot, fills my poor heart with something like pleasurable sensations; how many happy and miserable moments have I known in that house! since my beloved Augustus died, I
have

have been there but once; and, though he never is absent from my mind, that scene will bring him peculiarly to my imagination. Not a tree about the park but has lent us shelter; not a hill but whereon we have played with childish glee; and now, in a few short years, to think his matchless virtues, which were the admiration of all who knew him, sleep in the silent tomb: his warm benevolent heart, that would have made the meanest of creation happy, now beats no more. Ah, Harriet, excuse those tears. I will write no longer on this heart-rending subject.

Adieu. I go to take an airing with Sir Harry: he would not let me rest till I had promised him. His chariot is at the door; I must dry my eyes to attend him. Ever your's,

ADELINE REYNOLDS.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Myrtle-grove.

ALAS, my dear Harriet! I am distracted. Miss Belville is gone off with Sir Harry Evelin: what may not my Adeline have suffered from that detestable man? for I am sure she never went with her own consent. His sister would persuade us she did; and that it was impossible to have taken her by force: but I am confident to the contrary, though circumstances combine against her. It is now hardly light. I have not closed my eyes since I came here: but let me relate the particulars of this horrid affair with all the connection I can. Yesterday evening we came down in order to be present at an entertainment which was to be given by that detestable Sir Harry. On our arrival, Mrs. Evelin told us Miss Belville was gone to take the air with her brother.

After we had been at the Grove some hours, I grew very uneasy; and mentioned my fears to the Countess that some accident had happened. She endeavoured to calm my apprehensions, which increased as it grew late. Mrs. Evelin likewise appeared uneasy, frequently wondering at their long stay; though she begged us not to be alarmed, for Miss Belville had often staid out later than that with Sir Harry, as they were both
fond

fond of travelling by moon-light. She said she had persuaded Adeline not to go that evening, as we were expected at the grove. But she made answer, she had a particular reason for so doing; and would be back in time to receive us. This speech gave me the first idea of something base being in hand; nor did I scruple to mention my suspicions to my father, who reproved me for them, saying, "Miss Belville was certainly to do as she pleased: and, if what Mrs. Evelin said was true, which he should imagine, we need not be under any concern." In this state of suspense did we continue till two in the morning; when Mrs. Evelin declared she did not know what to think of Adeline's absence. I was almost distracted with my own apprehensions, and begged to have servants dispatched several ways, as some accident might have befallen the carriage. "No, Mr. Evelin said; he rather thought they had taken a trip to Scotland; for if any casualty had happened, Sir Harry would most likely have sent home one of his servants for assistance." My father seemed to listen to this speech, and enquired what reason Mr. Evelin had for saying so. He mentioned many circumstances that staggered my father, though they had no effect on me; I knew the heart of my Adeline was entirely devoted to the memory of Augustus. "Besides, sir, said I, where was the necessity of such a conduct? had Miss Belville felt a preference for your brother, who has any right, or would think of controul-

ing her? she might publicly have given him her hand without incurring censure; why then should she disappear in this manner, unless by force?"

"Nay, madam, answered he, I cannot pretend to clear up this affair; time alone can do it. I am convinced Miss Belville entered the carriage with her own consent, as I saw Sir Harry hand her in." My father then applied to Mrs. Evelin to be informed whether she had ever observed any degree of preference in the behaviour of Miss Belville to Sir Harry. She replied, "at some times she imagined so, and at others she did not. But as she never had presumed to controul Miss Belville, she generally spent much of her time alone; and frequently admitted Sir Harry to see her when others were denied that pleasure: and she was very certain her brother would not have taken this step without thinking it agreeable to the Lady." My father said, "he thought no man would dare do so presumptuous an act as to carry a girl of her consequence off by force." Conjectures were fruitless. I was confident in my own mind Adeline had never given her consent to such a proceeding, or indeed the smallest encouragement. To make me more easy, my dear Freemer went himself, and dispatched several servants different ways, to gain some tidings of her if possible. A chariot and six, which I find they left the grove in, could not pass unobserved through any place.

I must

I must leave writing, my dear Lady Thompson; my spirits are so affected I cannot proceed. The Countess is nearly as much hurt as I am. All who know my Adeline must love her.

Eleven o' clock in the morning.

Captain Fremer is returned, but without any certain tidings. A chariot was seen driving through a town very fast about ten miles distant early in the evening yesterday. He enquired if the servants had on liveries. They said they could not tell, as they were both wrapt up in horsemen's coats, and had flapped hats over their faces. This is all the intelligence they could glean with every enquiry they made. Alas, my Harriet! my beloved Adeline is certainly conveyed away by force. I must lay down my pen; I am unable to hold up my head.

Two o' clock.

The family from Belmont-abbey is here. The Earl and Sir Edward have taken horses, and declare they never will return without some news of Miss Belville. I never saw any thing like the fury they discovered when they were informed of Adeline's absence: the whole family are in the utmost distress on their accounts, lest they should meet with Sir Harry. I should have told you, Colonel Medway and my beloved Fremer,

are

are gone with them. Heaven protect their lives for their own sakes and Miss Belville's too!

Both Mr. and Mrs. Evelin declare they think she went with her own consent. My father seems rather to join in that opinion; though he declares if it is so, he never shall believe any goodness inhabits a human breast. He looked upon Adeline as the most perfect pattern of faith and constancy. Mrs. Medway and Mrs. Duncannon declare they know not what to think; but from Miss Belville's conduct it seems impossible she should act thus. The Countess and I are the only people that remain unshattered. I am so well acquainted with Adeline's heart, that it would be the highest injustice to suspect her capable of such a step.

I hope it will please heaven to cast a light on this horrid affair, or I shall be quite distracted. We strive to keep it as great a secret as we can, lest the reputation of my suffering friend should be injured. I fear her oppressed spirits will never be able to support this cruel insult.

Adieu, Harriet. Do not let the intelligence I have communicated distress you too much. Heaven will no doubt preserve the matchless virtues of our Adeline, and restore her in safety to us. I thought it necessary to let you know what has happened, lest by any unforeseen means you should hear of it, and imagine it worse than it really is. I will write immediately, if any thing comes to my knowledge concerning her worth.

com-

communicating. At present I hardly know what I say. Adieu. Ever your's

LOUISA FREEMER.

Lady THOMPSON to Mrs. FREEMER.

Elm-wood.

AH, my Louisa, what a letter was your last! I know not what I would say; how begin to answer it! Is it possible Mr. Somners can for a moment entertain doubts of the angelic Adeline? No; she is incapable of such a flight. I have a letter from the dear girl wrote the very evening she left the grove; I enclose it for your inspection; it will sufficiently prove her innocence. She is incapable of a falsehood. Where, where can she be? I am miserable on her account. My mother and Sir James are equally distressed. Never was any one so beloved as my Adeline. I dread to see Mr. Mortimer, who is coming here to-day. Poor man! he will deplore her loss sincerely; he loved her uncommon merit with paternal affection; her patient sufferings had endeared her to him.

If you have any regard for the most miserable family in the world, write, my dear Mrs. Freemer, by the servant who brings you this express. For what purpose the villain has conveyed her away, heaven knows; I am distracted with my own reflections. If it should please God to re-
store

store her to us, she will most likely never support the shock her spirits have received. To what a variety of trials has this amiable creature been exposed! her gentle mind has not recovered the death of Admiral Harrison before new woes assail her, and those of the most mortifying nature. How infernal must be that heart which is capable of executing so diabolical a plan! I cannot help suspecting Mrs. Evelin: if I wrong her, I am sorry for it. I have reason to think from many of Miss Belville's letters she would assist Sir Harry in almost any thing. When I was in town I mentioned my suspicions to Adeline, that I thought she had a lover in this gentleman. She never would allow it; and attributed all his assiduities to friendship, when they evidently proceeded from love. Sir James tells me he is generally thought a man of intrigue, and capable of any thing to gratify his passions: which confirms me in believing he has carried Miss Belville off by fraud. Heaven preserve the beloved friend of my youth, and deliver her from his power.

I will no longer detain the servant than to beg an answer as soon as possible, and subscribe myself affectionately your's,

HARRIET THOMPSON.

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Myrtle-grove.

I Will write, my dear Harriet, though I hardly know what to say. Nothing yet have we heard to relieve our anxiety. The Gentlemen have been absent two days. Heaven only can tell how this affair may terminate. I agree with you that Adeline is certainly forced away. My father begins to think so too. The letter you enclosed had a great effect on him: he observed a person must be very hypocritical that could write such a letter, and at the same time intend taking such a step.

I have not enjoyed a moment of tranquility since the loss of my Adeline; nor, till I have an account of her safety, shall I have one peaceful hour. My father would leave this place immediately; but he thinks we shall have an opportunity of hearing more than in London, besides observing the family. The Countess tells me Mrs. Evelin has just received a letter from her brother; I must leave you to know the contents.

Well, Lady Thompson, I am now more than ever convinced there is some vile underhand doings: I will transcribe the letter for you; it was brought by a stranger. He said he did not know who gave it him, but he believes it was a servant; who told him, if he would engage to deliver

ver that letter two days after he gave it him, he should have a guinea. The fellow joyfully accepted the office, and did as he was directed. As we found nothing was to be gained from this man, we dismissed him: the letter is as follows.

“ Dear Sister,

“ That you may not be uneasy about Miss Belville, I set down to inform you she is safe and well. Before this reaches you, we shall be on our voyage for a different realm. I would have persuaded my lovely companion not to go farther than to a distant part of the kingdom; but on account of two gentlemen who have declared themselves her lovers, she chooses to pass a little time abroad, till the matter is blown over. I flatter myself when we return I shall introduce the most beautiful woman in the world to my family as Lady Evelin; when we will properly explain to our friends the motives from which we acted. Our united respects attend my brother and yourself.

HENRY EVELIN.”

The grossness of this letter at once convinces me it is an atrocious falsehood. A very likely circumstance, that Miss Belville should pursue such measures, merely because the Earl and Sir Edward were her declared lovers! I am very certain by the behaviour of Mrs. Evelin she is not ignorant of her brother's intentions: my father
and

and the Countess are of the same opinion. The fortune of Miss Belville is sufficient temptation for her to wish Sir Harry success. I find his own estate is very much involved; and no doubt, if he can obtain Adeline's hand either by fraud or force, it will effectually answer his purpose: not that I believe he is actuated by this motive only. Mrs. Medway tells me she is certain he was very much in love with Miss Belville, and frequently discovered it by his behaviour and jealousy of Lord Arundel.

Ah, my Harriet! the little we can gain from this letter is worse than our former uncertainty. What may not the dear girl suffer from his brutality? I tremble but to think of it. If he is determined to force her hand, he will stop at nothing to terrify her; her steady soul will scorn all his arts, and she may make him desperate. I well know her resolution, and dread every thing from his villainy. I hear the trampling of horses. It is the gentlemen returned.

Alas, my dear Lady Thompson! they have not heard any thing of our Adeline, though they have adopted every plan which could possibly tend to a discovery of Sir Harry.

The letter has made my Lord and Sir Edward almost mad. They protest Miss Belville never proposed quitting the kingdom, and it is all an invention of his; but they will be revenged on him if he is to be found upon earth. I feared a quarrel with Mr. Evelin, and begged they would

would moderate their passion. But he behaved very well in the affair, and acknowledged the violence of these gentlemen was very excusable, and he was infinitely concerned that such a circumstance had happened in his house.

We leave them to-morrow; never I hope to enter this mansion again. I am sure Mrs. Evelin knows more than she has divulged; though from my heart I believe her husband is totally ignorant of this diabolical affair.

Adieu, my dear Lady Thompson. My heart is almost broke. You shall hear soon again from your sincerely affectionate

LOUISA FREEMER.

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-square.

I Know not what to say to you, my Harriet, or I should have wrote before. No tidings have we yet received of our Adeline, though I believe we have enquired all over the kingdom by different people. The Earl and Sir Edward are both in town under the most terrifying apprehensions for her. Mr. Evelin has been at our house several times, and assures us he knows not where Sir Harry is: he has sent to both his country seats, but he has not been at either. It is now above a week since she first left Myrtle-grove. Poor dear creature! what must she not have suffered in that time! let her be where she will, her confinement must be great, or she would have wrote. Mr. Evelin is still of opinion she went off with her own consent; though our obstinacy to the contrary rather staggers him: he has really behaved very well in this affair, and shares our concern for her loss. I begged to know if Sir Harry had any other places in the country except Fairy-hill and Rushbrook-castle. He assured me upon his honour he had not. My father has sent to both seats, but he is not nor has been there.

Ah, Lady Thompson! what will become of us? The Countess strives to keep up my spirits,
but

but in vain. If my Adeline is unhappy, and forced into a hated marriage, adieu to every comfort. Captain Freemer is nearly as much affected as I am. In short, never was there a family in greater distraction. But all our grief appears nothing, when compared to the Earl's and Sir Edward's.

We were not able to conceal Miss Belville's loss from her servants; they all discovered the most extravagant concern: one would imagine they had lost all they had in the world, such general lamentations prevail. The sorrow of old William is most affecting; he has not taken any nourishment for many days, nor can I prevail on him by any intreaty; he refuses every thing, and walks up and down the house wringing his hands. Adieu, my Harriet; I cannot write longer.

LOUISA FREEMER.

Sir HARRY EVELIN to Captain MONTAGUE.

Sparrow-Wood.

MAY eternal curses blast the whole world ; and may every person in it feel the agony of disappointment that now rends my heart ! Miss Belville is gone, Montague, gone for ever ! Ah, my devilish squeamishness, not to have forced her hand when she was first brought here ! but I thought to have prevailed by tenderness, and have undone myself ; my folly, my damned folly, has ruined me ! Never shall I again look up ; upon my soul, this cruel blow to all my wishes, will break my heart ; I shall not survive it : Adeline will be revenged, and I shall be justly punished. I have not ceased swearing a moment, since I made the mortifying discovery, 'till I took up my pen to write ; but let me tell you how it happened : I rose this morning, and went to Miss Belville's chamber ; I asked, through the key-hole, how she did ; but received no answer. Alarmed at this, I hastily opened the door, and looked all over the room ; but she was not there ; like a madman I roared for Deborah, who was not yet up. I flew to her room, where she lay fast asleep ; I swore I would kill her, instantly, if she did not tell me all she knew of Miss Belville ; the poor devil, frightened out of her wits, jumped out of bed ;
and,

and, throwing herself on her knees, swore, by all that was good, she knew nothing about her. I was soon convinced she was not concerned in her escape; and bid her dress herself, and follow me down stairs. I returned to the chamber of my cruel charmer; again I looked over every part of it; but no traces of her was to be found; stung to the heart, I threw myself down on the window-seat, and perceived a ladder of ropes fastened to it; this was proof sufficient how she escaped; but then who could assist her? that some one brought her this ladder was evident; again, I suspected the old woman, and interrogated her very warmly; she was nearly as much surprized as I had been; and, in the most solemn manner, protested her innocence. I looked narrowly about the wood, thinking she might lay concealed in some part of it, but in vain; I saw the marks of human feet through several of the thickest brambles; at the extremity of the wood, horses had been; by that means, it was evident, she got away; but by whom assisted, I know not.

A hope of regaining her is weak and ridiculous; what then will become of me! if I return to London, I must fight with Lord Arundel or Sir Edward; they will certainly espouse her cause; well, and what if I fall? life is a burden to me, and I wish to get rid of it. Ah! Montague, my brain is on fire; I am all despair. Sure some peculiar power protects this lady; so
nothing,

nothing, I think, but a hand divine, could have got her from me. No human feet, I dare say, has before trod this horrid place, for years; the neighbouring people believe this mansion is the abode of witches and infernal spirits. I wish but to find the man who aided her escape; and when I had cut him piecemeal, I would shoot myself.

I am preparing to leave this place; where I shall go, heaven knows: I must conceal myself, for a time, 'till I hear how the return of Miss Belville is received; but what care I? hell would be preferable to what I feel at this moment.

HENRY EVELIN.

Miss

Miss BELVILLE to Mrs. FREEMER.

FROM a very humble, though, I hope, safe dwelling, I write, Louisa, to tell you I live. Ah! my friend, what must you, and my other favourers, have suffered on my account! I have been innured to sorrow; and felt, not greatly for myself, though for your pangs, my heart was torn with anguish. Surely, thy Adeline must have been very wicked, without intention, to call for such a variety of afflictions! but let me not repine, nor, for a moment, murmur against the power who has suffered such peculiar misfortunes to befall me. I propose, if I have spirits to go through the narrative, to relate the particulars of every thing that has happened since I left Myrtle Grove, in a fatal hour, left it. I hardly know where to begin. Ah! Mrs. Freemer, my heart has undergone a very severe shock, but no more of that: I left off writing a letter to Lady Thompson, in order to attend Sir Harry Evelin in an airing, as I had promised: he had drawn this engagement from me reluctantly, as I knew you, and my other beloved friends, were to be down that evening; however, as I had said I would go, I put on my cloak, and went down stairs; he met me in the hall, and taking my hand, "my dear Miss Belville, said he, I fear we shall have hardly time enough for our ride, if you delay much longer, the carriage waits." He
led

led me towards it; I observed, six horses were unnecessary for so short an excursion as ours; he said, we should go with more expedition, and therefore he had ordered them: we were soon seated in the carriage; Mr. Evelin saw us, and wished us a pleasant ride; away we flew. I said, two or three times, I thought we went very fast; in answer to that, he observed, the horses were a great deal out of exercise, and hardly knew what to do with themselves. I made no more observations; and we proceeded on, 'till I imagined we might be about ten or twelve miles from the Grove; I looked on my watch, and found it was considerably past seven; I then proposed to Sir Harry that we should return; saying, I thought by the time we got back you would be come; he let down the glass, and ordered the postilion to turn round at the first convenient place: we were then in a narrow lane; the fellow answered, he could not turn 'till he got out of that lane, which was very long; Sir Harry swore at him, and asked why he came that way? he replied, when we got upon the Common it was much nearer home; his master bid him proceed, and make haste. We then talked on a variety of subjects for a considerable time.

Sir Harry endeavoured to engage my attention by every method he could think of; as I had not the least suspicion, he succeeded very

well. I was surprized, on letting down the window, to see the moon almost risen, and again looked on my watch; "bless me, said I, it is past nine o'clock!" "Indeed!" answered Sir Harry, I did not think it was so late; this fellow must certainly have lost his way;" he called to him several times; but he made him no answer. At last he stopped and said, we were not far from the Grove. "Surely, Thomas, said I, there is no Common so near Mr. Evelin's, as I remember;" "yes, madam, replied he, there is; but I believe you never was there before." Again, he drove on with the utmost expedition; the moon was entirely up, I wondered we were not at home; and I could not avoid observing to Sir Harry, it was very amazing that the man should have lost himself, as was certainly the case, or we would not have been so long in returning; he made a slight answer to what I said; which first gave me a suspicion of the truth. "For heaven's sake, Sir Harry, said I, tell me to what part of the world I am going; and for what purpose thus drawn away; (he looked confused) I insist upon knowing, sir, what you mean; for I am certain, by the manner of our going, your servant has instructions." "He has, my lovely Miss Belville, answered he, I will acknowledge the truth; your cruelty, madam, inspired me with this scheme; I found I could not live without you: and therefore, at any hazard, resolved to

to secure you mine ; despair prompted me to fall on this method : you had forbid me to hope, and threatened never to see me more, if I again mentioned my passion ; what could I do ? I loved you to a degree of madness ; and seized this opportunity to convey you to a place of my own 'till you honour me with your hand. My intentions towards you, madam, are perfectly honourable ; when you are Lady Evelin, we will go to any part of the globe you please. Forgive then, my beloved Adeline, this gentle violence, which despair alone suggested as the only method to secure you mine. My affection for you amounts almost to adoration ; and will continue to the end of my life." He ceased, I was silent ; he would have taken my hand ; I hastily withdrew it. Again he proceeded : " Believe me, madam, nothing would have induced me to have done what I have, but the certainty that you never would have listened to my love ; and yet I cannot avoid fondly flattering myself, if I could once convince you of my sincere attachment, you might condescend to bless me with your hand." " And is this the way you mean to prove your love, Sir Harry, answered I ; but whither are you taking me ?" " To a house not far distant, madam ;" " and for what purpose, sir ?" " To make me the happiest of men, by becoming my wife, charming Miss Belville !" " Do you mean to use compulsion, sir ?" " Not if it can be avoided, madam,

but you must be mine ; no power on earth shall force you from me ; I have proceeded thus far, and will finish my purpose, or die in the attempt." I was terrified, and could not refrain my tears. " Cruel man, said I, why will you thus distress me ? Reflect on the agonies of my Louisa and her amiable father. Ah, Sir Harry, if you have a spark of humanity in your composition, let me return ; I care not for myself, but the sorrow of my friends distracts me." I clasped my hands together, in great emotion, and continued weeping. " Compose yourself, Miss Belville, said he, this grief is unavailing ; you must go to the place I have fixed ; you have nothing to apprehend from my treatment. When you consent to become Lady Evelin, I will attend you wherever you please ; but, 'till then, you must be content to suffer a little confinement. As to your friends, madam, continued he, with an insulting sneer, I have taken care to pacify them ; they will have a letter to-morrow, that will inform them you are safe and well. I suppose you reckon Lord Arundel and Sir Edward Wilmot among the number of your friends ; your flight, as I have represented it, will give them a great deal of concern, I have no doubt ; but if they knew how much you suffered likewise, they would not grudge ten times more affliction, to purchase so many pearly drops from the most beautiful eyes in the world."

I sur-

I surveyed him with the utmost horror; and finding he had finished his cruel speech, I answered him, though I could not suppress the tears that streamed down my cheeks: "Indeed, Sir Harry, I did not think you capable of such cruelty as your last words discovered; however, if you imagine the method you have adopted will intimidate me, you are mistaken. I declare now, as I have often done before, I never will be your wife: rather than violate my faith to Mr. Grenville, though I regard self-murder as the greatest crime, I would meet death from my own hands; but I believe, continued I, there will not be the least occasion for means so violent; your cruel treatment, joined to the many troubles I have known for a series of years, will end the conflict, and I shall effectually escape your power." Had not my spirits been in a violent flutter, Louisa, I should have been ashamed of such a speech, but, at the moment, I thought a little ill-usage would soon break my heart. "Remember, Miss Belleville, answered he, you are now intirely in my power; it is your own fault if you drive me to extremities; I will make you my wife, before we part, let what will be the consequence. You cannot violate your faith to a man departed; Mr. Grenville possessed your heart while he lived; but he is gone, and you are no longer under any engagements; therefore think no more of him, my lovely Adeline, but make happy the man who

adores you." "Not think of him! replied I, alas! he is never a moment absent from my thoughts! my memory dwells upon his virtues with delight. Ah, my Augustus! cried I, would thy Adeline was with thee in a better world! for I see no comfort is my portion in this." The stopping of the carriage prevented my proceeding. "Come, Miss Belville, said Sir Harry, we are now arrived at the end of our journey." The servant opened the door, he took my hand: I knew it would be a folly to make resistance, and therefore suffered him to help me out. I could hardly stand; he supported me, and begged I would not be alarmed. The chaise drove off, with great expedition, the moment we had quitted it. We walked to the entrance of a very gloomy wood; through the thick trees, the moon with difficulty penetrated: I found we were to enter this horrid place, which looked like the abode of some Magician, and therefore walked on without hesitation.

After passing through several intricate turnings and windings, we came to an old house, which by the light of the moon, I discovered was in a very ruinous condition: Sir Harry knocked at the door, which was opened by a horrid-looking woman: "Have you got candles, Deborah?" said he; she answered in the affirmative, and led us through a long passage, at the end of which was a large old-fashioned room, with a table spread,

spread, and several candles lighted; when she had conducted us, she shut the door and retired: I flung myself on a sofa, quite wearied. Sir Harry seated himself by me, and strove, by every argument he could think of, to make me easier; assuring me, nothing but the most perfect honour was intended me; I heard him, but made not the least answer; he intreated me to eat, but I could not touch any thing; with much difficulty, I drank a glass of wine: finding I was resolved not to partake of the repast, he sat down by himself, and eat of several things; when he had supped, the old woman took away the cloth, and retired as before; again, he made many protestations of everlasting love and honour; concluding with saying, "whenever I chose to retire, the servant should conduct me." I told him, "I wished it immediately;" he rung the bell, she soon appeared; "shew this lady to her chamber," said he; she took two candles, and went before; Sir Harry, respectfully, wished me good night; I returned him no answer, but followed my conductress in silence; she led me to a room over that we had been sitting in; and offered her assistance to undress me; I told her, I never had any; and that she might retire. After some little hesitation, she said, she hoped I should not be angry, but her master had ordered her to bring the key of my chamber to him, and that she must not disobey him." Finding

ing it would be in vain to resist, I told her she might do as she pleased; she curtsied, and, wishing me good night, went out, and locked the door after her. I then took a survey of my prison; there was no door in it but the one she had locked; the windows were very high from the ground, which rendered a thought of escape from them vain. The whole appearance of the room was horrid beyond description; in many parts of it was carving, and old-fashioned decorations, that served more to terrify, than ornament; the sides were hung with tapestry, worked in large figures. I looked on them 'till I imagined they were living. Wearied with this foolish employment, I threw myself on the bed, and wept, for some time, without intermission; tired, at last, I dropped asleep; it was broad day when I awoke; and looking on my watch, I found it near seven o'clock; after re-dressing, I betook myself to the window to see what sort of a place I was in: the house is incircled by an extensive wood; a court before it, seems to have been taken from part of it; a high wall surrounds this court, which is full of weeds, and in a very ruinous condition.

Through a break in the wood, I observed something like a tower, the greatest part of which was mouldered away; and that which stood, served only for the habitation of owls. There are two wings to the house; or rather, I should

should say, have been ; for they are now in ruins. Indeed, there seems not any of the dwelling habitable, except that part where I was.

When I had, for some time, observed the gloomy objects that surrounded me, I heard some one unlock my door ; it proved to be the old woman ; who told me, her master was up, and waited breakfast for me ; I followed her down stairs. Sir Harry met me at the door of the parlour, and politely enquired after my health ? I answered, as it really was, indifferent. He begged me to make tea ; I did so, and drank several dishes ; he expressed his satisfaction at it ; and, when breakfast was over, asked me if I would honour him with my company in a walk ? As I hoped to make some observations that might be of service to me, I consented ; and we went together into the wood ; he shewed me the house which, on the outside, appears in the most ruinous state ; the wood, likewise, has not been properly taken care of ; and is not much better than the mansion. In vain I looked for some path that might lead me out of it, if I should be fortunate enough to get from the house, it appeared impassable in every part ; nor could I discover the path we came.

When I returned to the house, I said, “ I would retire to my apartment ; which Sir Harry immediately consented to, assuring me, every thing I wished should be complied with if I

would favour him. I made no answer, but went up stairs; where I staid 'till dinner was ready, when I was again summoned to the parlour. As soon as the cloth was removed, Sir Harry again entered on the hateful topic of marriage. I assured him, no consideration whatever should oblige me to break my resolution. He appeared surprized at my declaration. "Do you consider, madam, said he, that you are not at your own house, or where you command? You have heard my fixed purpose, and I am not to be moved more than yourself. I have no more than this to say, Miss Belville, I love you with the most passionate fondness, and am determined to make you my wife; if you will not consent, your hand must be forced; I give you, from this time, six days to consider of it; nor, 'till they are elapsed, will I use any forcible method; all shall be mildness and persuasion only; but after that time, if you do not freely give your hand, I will by force receive it; and when you are my wife, no human power will have any right to part us.

Collecting all the firmness I could into my countenance, I answered him; "Believe me, Sir Harry, your threats and intreaties have the same effect on me; they shake not the steady purpose of my soul; I never will be your's: and let any man force my hand, or you receive it at your peril." I found myself greatly hurt at this indelicate treatment, and walked up and down the room

room in anger. He endeavoured to appease me, and my displeasure lasted not long: I sat down again, and reflected, violence would be of no service to me. I determined to appear satisfied if possible, and by that means make him less cautious. In the evening I begged to have the key of my room. He replied, it gave him infinite concern to refuse me such a trifle, but till I was his, or had promised to be so, he could not indulge me: he engaged upon his honour. I should not receive the smallest molestation from him. Finding I could not succeed, I thought it better to say no more of it. I retired to my gloomy chamber as the night before; and seating myself in the window, began to think in what manner I should proceed: after reflecting a great while, I saw no possibility of escape. The horrors of my situation caused me to shed tears in great abundance; the moon shone through the trees, and discovered part of the gloomy wood; the owls from the ruined tower hooted in a melancholy tone; and the noise of the trees agitated by the wind compleated the mournful assemblage of disagreeable sound. Tired at last with my own sad reflections, I retired to bed; where nature exhausted soon fell asleep, and lost in balmy repose the remembrance of every disagreeable sensation: but too soon it fled, and I awoke to the full sense of my unhappy situation.

When

When I joined Sir Harry at breakfast, he paid me many compliments on my appearance, which was greatly improved by the repose I had been blessed with. This day was passed exactly as the former; Sir Harry took every opportunity of mentioning his passion: I heard him, because I could not help it; but I continued determined rather to die than marry him. Thus passed five horrid days; all was a repetition of the same disagreeable theme. At parting the fifth evening, he told me he flattered himself I should give him the day after the next an answer favourable to his wishes. "I would give you the longest time, my dear Miss Belville," continued he, to overcome your scruples; and therefore have not desired a reply till the morning of the seventh day." "You know my determination, Sir Harry, said I, sighing; nor shall I ever alter it." I stayed not for his answer, but went to my own apartment: here as usual I sat down in the window, and paid a large tribute of tears to my misery. Sincerely did I pray to be taken from this world, as I saw no human means of escaping from a misfortune worse than death. I was entirely engrossed by my gloomy situation, when I was suddenly interrupted in my melancholy employment by the sound of a voice under my window. I looked down; and by the light of the moon perceived a man holding a paper in his hand. "Whoever you are, exclaimed I, if
you

you have the least compassion, assist me in escaping from this house, where I am confined against my inclination." "I know it, madam, answered he, and will bring you things proper for your escape to-morrow night; this letter will inform you who sent me:" he put it on a very high stick, and held it to me: I took it; he immediately retired. When I had recovered my surprise at an event that seemed so directly the work of providence, I opened the letter, which contained the following words:

"Madam,

"The inclosed will inform you by what means I came to know of your situation, and convince you at once of my truth and real desire to serve you. That letter fell out of Captain Montague's pocket some time ago, and fortunately was found by me. Shocked at a scheme so diabolical, I determined to frustrate it, and preserve one innocent and perhaps amiable woman from misery. I conjectured from the contents of the epistle you did not love Sir Harry, and therefore was convinced I should do you a real service in rescuing you from his power. The person who delivers this will be at your window the next evening with things proper for your escape, if you are inclined to accept of his assistance: he will have horses a little out of the wood, and will convey you safe to his mother's, who lives almost eight and twenty miles from where you are. They are

are both very worthy and honest people; and in their cottage you need not fear Sir Harry will discover you. I will answer with my life for their care of you, till you inform your friends of your situation or adopt what plan you think proper. It now only remains, madam, to inform you who I am, and by what means I came to be acquainted with Captain Montague, who is an intimate friend of Sir Harry's, and generally resides at Fairy-hill. My name is Emelia Ayscough, once the happiest of women; but by forfeiting my innocence I became the most miserable. Sir Harry Evelin is the cruel spoiler of my peace; he won my credulous heart, and made me swerve from virtue: I fled a father's love, a mother's fostering arms, the kind protection of a parent's roof, to follow this beloved destroyer of my happiness. I hoped to have been his wife; that flattering dream was quickly ended. In a little time, my artless love was disregarded; and I was forsaken for some new favourite; but this, madam, was a small punishment in comparison to my fault. Two hapless children was the consequence of my unfortunate error; who, with their wretched mother, are doomed to infamy and disgrace; 'tis true, Sir Harry kept me above want, and placed me at Fairy Hill; where I have, ever since, lived. It was here Captain Montague accidentally dropped the letter which informed me of your situation. Though the
same

same base conduct is not intended for you, that was practised against me, yet misery must be the consequence, if you marry such a man as Sir Harry, without affection; let your perfections be ever so exquisite, they will not long hold him; he is inconstant as the wind; and no earthly charms can alter his natural disposition.

“I hope, madam, you will take my intentions as they are meant, intirely to do you service. I have experienced enough of woe, myself, from his machinations; and shall rejoice to save one innocent woman from misery. When you have escaped his power, if you would inform me of your safety, I should esteem it a sufficient recompence for the service I wish to render you. Believe me, madam, though I have swerved from the narrow road of virtue, I am not absolutely abandoned; I have sincerely repented my deviation from innocence; and, while I have life, I shall continue to lament my weak credulity. I think my stay cannot be long in this world; and, was one unhappy circumstance off my mind, I could contentedly die, and leave my poor boys to providence: this is, having brought a beloved father and mother to the grave, with shame; my inexcusable flight broke their hearts; and they survived not long after it.

“Pardon me, madam, I will no longer take up your time with my troubles; but subscribe myself your sincere well-wisher,

EMILIA AYSCOUGH.”

The enclosed letter was as follows :

To Captain MONTAGUE.

“ A T last, Montague, I am come to a resolution of taking Miss Belville, from Myrtle Grove, by fraud : my last conversation with her convinces me, nothing will move her to give me her hand while she continues in the power of her friends ; but, when I have her in my possession, if she refuses to become my wife, I am determined to force her. I have spoke to Tom Allen, and he will be at hand to perform the ceremony. I think it a bold undertaking ; but, if I am successful, it will amply pay me both for the anxiety and trouble I shall have been at. Miss Belville is expected at Myrtle Grove in a few days ; the first favourable opportunity I shall take her away. As my absence would be suspected, I must get you to have things prepared ready for our reception at Sparrow Wood ; though I am apprehensive we shall not find a room fit to set in ; I have not been there for so many years, that, I dare say, it is almost entirely blown down ; however, you must have a few things carried there ; for to that place I shall certainly convey my lovely prize. I know we never should be discovered there ; and an escape from that house is impossible, without supernatural assistance.

“ I can-

“ I cannot execute my purpose without the knowledge of Mrs. Evelin; and therefore have sounded her upon it; she started some objections at first; but when I convinced her my intentions were intirely honourable, she promised to do what she could for me.

“ I have another favour to beg of you, Montague, and that is, to make a visit to Fanny Smyth; and, in my name, pacify her, if possible; the little vixen threatens to leave the Castle, and come to Fairy Hill, if I do not shortly appear. As the situation of my affairs with Miss Belville renders such an expedition totally inconvenient, I must be obliged to your friendship to conclude matters without it.

“ When once I am possessed of my adored Adeline, I will dispose both of her and Emilia. All my thoughts will be confined to the divine Lady Evelin. I shall be extremely sorry if she obliges me to use any degree of compulsion; though when once she is my wife, her excellent ideas of duty will lead her to make the best of it. I flatter myself, time, and my constant endeavours to make her happy, may induce her gentle heart to regard me with affection.

“ Upon my soul, Montague, this charming girl engrosses all my thoughts! I could not support life without her; which I hope, when she is convinced of, may plead my pardon for the step I mean to take.

“ I shall

“ I shall have no difficulty in persuading her to take an airing with me ; and then adieu to every scruple ; away we go to Sparrow Wood, where I hope to be made the happiest of men ! Let me know, Montague, when things are ready there ; and engage old Deborah by way of attendant. When I am happy enough to fix the day of our arrival, she shall be informed. In the mean time, I am yours, under a state of disagreeable doubt and fear,

HENRY EVELIN.”

When

When I had finished reading these two epistles, I cannot give you the least idea of my sensations, by description; gratitude to Heaven and my kind deliverer, took entire possession of my heart; I poured forth my thanks to the Almighty, who had thus sent me comfort when I was near despair; and having deposited the letters in my pocket-book, betook myself to bed with a heart more at ease than for a long while past.

When I met Sir Harry at breakfast, my countenance, I suppose, expressed a degree of satisfaction in it, that had not before appeared since I had been in the house; for he observed it, and said, "if I knew the joy a smile of mine gave him, I would, in mere humanity, sometimes condescend to wear those captivating graces." I answered with a degree of good humour that threw him into raptures, and we passed the day in great harmony: In the afternoon he proposed a walk; but I refused, under pretence of a headache; though the true reason was, lest my kind deliverer should be any where near, and Sir Harry see him, which would not fail to inspire him with suspicions; he instantly consented to stay at home, and we passed the evening together; he seemed elated at the change in my behaviour; and expressed his happiness at it in the most extravagant terms; he said he flattered himself my answer, the next day, would be favourable to his wishes. I did not absolutely contradict that
idea,

idea, which put him in high spirits; he drank several glasses of wine, and importuned me to do so likewise. After I had taken my usual quantity, which was two glasses, I arose, and wished him a good night; he begged I would honour him with my company for another half-hour; but I urged my indisposition as an excuse; which immediately silenced him, and he led me to the door with expressions of violent love. Soon after, I heard him retire to his own chamber, which is not far distant from that I slept in; I opened my window with a palpitating heart, and looked every where for my conductor; but I could not see him. I continued in a disagreeable state of expectation for near two hours; my fertile imagination tormented me with ideal apprehensions; at last, my deliverer appeared, and threw up to me a ladder of ropes, which I fastened to the window; and with a heart that hardly beat, through fear, I cast my eyes to Heaven, and ventured on it; how I got down, I know not; however, I soon found myself in his arms. "Heaven preserve me!" said I, and deliver me from the horrors of this place!" "Fear not, madam, answered my guide, I will lead you out of this wood quickly;" he took my hand, and broke a way, through the brambles, as well as he could; I followed him with all the expedition I could make, and we soon lost sight of the house. He asked me if I could ride? "O, yes, said I, only give

give me a horse, and I will not suffer him to be tedious." He smiled at my eagerness, and again begged I would not be alarmed.

After passing over many brambles, we came to a path that led us out of the wood. In an adjacent field there were two horses tied to a tree; my companion seated me on one, and mounting the other, we galloped off with precipitation; the moon was very bright, and it was more pleasant for riding than by day.

So great was my fear of being pursued, that my deliverer could, with difficulty, keep up with me; he often assured me there was no danger; but his assurances did not retard my expedition. In about two hours and a half, we came to a neat cottage, which stood on a common; here my guide stopped, and told me, I had reached the end of my journey; he knocked at the door, which was opened by his mother; she welcomed me to her house with honest plainness; and said, every thing she could do, I might command; I thanked her; and told them both, they should be amply rewarded for their humanity to a stranger. "As to that, madam, answered the old woman, neither I, nor my son, want any reward; if we have done you service, I rejoice at it; Madam Ayscough did not tell Robin what you was confined for, nor who you was; she only said, she believed you was a young lady of fashion that Sir Harry had forced away from
your

your friends ; to be sure, Sir Harry is a sad man to her, as well as to many others ; though I believe she loves him dearly for all that ; for she cried sadly, my son says, when she told him what to do ; and said, she hoped to save, at least, one of her own sex from the misery she had suffered." " Aye, that she did, interrupted the young man, and I do believe, though she is not married to Sir Harry, she is as good a lady as ever lived." I could not restrain my tears that flowed for the misfortunes of this amiable woman ; and heartily did I wish to extricate her from the power of her cruel seducer, which, if it pleases Heaven to preserve my life, I mean to do.

I asked these honest people much more about Miss Ayscough ; and their accounts still increased my pity for her : I find Sir Harry has, for some time, totally neglected her.

Oh ! my Louisa, what a detestable man is this ! what exquisite misery has thy Adeline escaped by the humanity of the poor undone Emilia ! When the old woman had drawn her portrait, which she did in very striking colours, she assured me, it was out of pure regard for her, that they undertook to assist my escape ; and not for any hope of reward. " Ah ! madam, said poor Robin, scratching his head, but if I had seen you, I would willingly hazard my life to serve so pretty a lady ; " I thank you, Mr.

Mr. Harris, answered I, let your motives for behaving so humanely be what they would, I am greatly obliged to you; and shall regard you as my deliverer while I have life; be assured, you have not conferred an obligation on a sordid, or mean disposition; but on one who will never fail to acknowledge it, and will amply pay you with this world's goods: as an earnest of what I intend, I entreat your acceptance of this trifle, giving him my purse (which I believe contained about twenty guineas) I have one more favour to beg of you, and then I hope to give you no further trouble." The old woman and her son stood aghast at the sight of the gold, and promised to do whatever I desired; I then told them, it was no more than to beg they would convey a letter to London; for I wanted some of my own servants to attend me to town, as I was fearful it might be dangerous going alone. The young man immediately offered to take it himself; I readily accepted his proposal.

I determined to begin writing as soon as my spirits were sufficiently composed. I told Mrs. Harris, I wished to lay down for a few hours, as I found myself very much fatigued; she immediately attended me to a neat chamber, with great respect; and assuring me I was perfectly safe, left me to my repose. After acknowledging my obligations to Heaven, I undressed, and took possession of my humble bed, with more
plea-

pleasurable sensations than I ever experienced in the most superb apartment. I soon fell asleep, and waked not 'till nine o'clock. I arose, and joined my hospitable entertainer, who had prepared my breakfast in a little rural parlour, the windows of which were almost obscured by the quantity of jessamine that grew around them. With much difficulty I prevailed on Mrs. Harris to set down; she said, she had no right to set before such a fine lady; however, in a short time, I banished her reserve, and she told me many stories relative to Sir Harry, which made me shudder. When I had finished breakfast, she brought me pen, ink, and paper, desiring, if I should want any thing else, I would ring. I immediately began this letter, though I was then so much hurried, I hardly knew how to arrange my thoughts. I found it impracticable to go through the whole detail, of what had happened, in one day; and therefore, when I had wrote half the letter, I was obliged to lay it aside 'till this morning.

You have now, my beloved Mrs. Freemer, the whole account of what has occurred since my unfortunate departure from Myrtle Grove. I thought it would be better to write the particulars, as I should not have been able to have related them verbally, my spirits are so much hurt; but, however, do not be uneasy, I am in very good health; and shall, no doubt, get intirely the

the better of this shock. I have sympathized with you, Louisa, in the uneasiness I am convinced you experienced during my absence. I think you could not, for a moment, imagine your Adeline capable of taking such a step, with her own consent; indeed I am not; my whole life proves the contrary. The anguish of my amiable friends, Lord Arundel and Sir Edward, has greatly increased mine; I hope I am not lessened in their esteem; it would hurt my peace, very much, to find I was; shew them this letter, my Louisa; and if they have before thought me culpable, they will now cease to censure my conduct. Likewise be so good to send it to Lady Thompson, she will wonder at my silence; and I am incapable of writing, over again, the horrid particulars that occasioned it. As I am, at present, in a place of safety, I do not choose to come alone to town; therefore let the chariot and six be sent hither, with old William, John, and Richard. Mr. Harris, who brings you this, will shew them where to come. And may I not hope, either you, or Captain Freemer, will come in it? Indeed, my friend, I need a comforter. Adieu, I will detain my kind deliverer no longer; but hasten to subscribe myself your truly affectionate

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-square.

WHILE the carriage is getting ready to convey me to my Adeline, I set down to write a few lines to my dear Lady Thompson; the enclosed will tell you the present situation of our beloved friend, and what she has suffered. Alas! my Harriet, I fear this shocking affair will impair her health; Mr. Harris tells me she is not well, and looks very pale, though more beautiful than any thing he ever beheld before; the honest man is quite in raptures with her. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward have been profusely generous to him; I believe they have given him more money than he ever saw in his whole life; they both go down with me and the Countess. My father is not able to go from the gout; and Captain Freemer is detained in town on particular business. Oh! Lady Thompson, never was there a family of more joy than ours! we are now as much elated, as we were before depressed; the general satisfaction extends even to Miss Belville's servants; they would give the preserver of their lady all they possess, if he would accept it; I acknowledge I was infinitely pleased at the gratitude they discovered.

Adieu,

FEMALE STABILITY. 171

Adieu, my Harriet; I send this express to
make you as happy as your affectionate

LOUISA FREEMER.

P. S. We shall bring our Adeline immediately to town; therefore send her letter thither as soon as you conveniently can; I have hardly read it.

Lady THOMPSON to Mrs. FREEMER.

Elm Wood.

AH! my Louisa, what strange discoveries has Miss Belville's letter produced! I am so delighted, that I know not how to relate particulars. I am infinitely obliged by the kind expedition you made in conveying my Adeline's letter to me; no words can do justice to the feelings it excited. When I had perused it, I was in an agony of joy; my mother and Sir James were not less delighted; as soon as I had regained any degree of composure, I said I would immediately go to the retirement of Mr. Mortimer, and make him a sharer in my happiness; accordingly I ordered the chariot, and thither I went with Adeline's letter in my hand.

When I arrived at his rural habitation, the venerable man was walking among the trees, reading, as usual. My approach disturbed Pompey, who was running by the side of his master; he looked up to discover what occasioned the emotion of his dog; and seeing me, shut his book, and advanced towards me; I was out of breath with the haste I had made; and could only say,

say, "Oh! sir, Adeline, my dear Adeline, is safe!" "Heavens be praised! my child, said he; how are you informed of this joyful event?" "This letter, replied I, is from Miss Belville herself, and gives a full account of all that has befallen her; I brought it for your perusal." "I thank you, my dear, said he, we will go in and read it." I followed him into the house, and seated myself; he did so likewise, and began to peruse the letter. He stopped, several times, to make observations on the conduct of Sir Harry; he called Miss Belville amazing girl, amiable sufferer, and such epithets. When he came to Miss Ayscough's letter, he turned pale; "Gracious God! exclaimed he, what do I see! the name of my child! my long-lost Emilia!" Unable to comprehend his meaning, I begged him to explain himself; which, from the violence of his emotions, he was unable to do.

When he had recovered his voice, "ah! Lady Thompson, said he, I have found my child! my long-lamented daughter still lives in the deliverer of Miss Belville; my real name is Ayscough; I have now no reason to conceal it longer; I thank thee, Oh! my God, continued he, lifting his streaming eyes to Heaven, that thou hast awakened a sense of shame in my mistaken Emilia! I trust, her penitence has reconciled her to thee! and I have no resentment

against her.²¹ He could not proceed; his voice was choaked with sobs, and I feared he would have fainted. I exerted every argument to calm his violent emotions; and, in some time, had the pleasure to find him composed.

I sincerely congratulated him on the discovery of this amiable, injured woman. He said he would go to town, and, by some means, inform his daughter that he still survived; I proposed Miss Belville, as the properest person, to convey this interesting intelligence; he immediately intreated, I would apply to her for that purpose. I know my Adeline will undertake the office of comforter to the distressed Miss Ayscough. The fine feelings of our friend will best instruct her in what manner to impart the tidings of joy to the unfortunate Emilia; her sad heart has so long been unaccustomed to pleasing sensations, that a happiness like this, unless it was revealed with considerate tenderness, might prove too much for her oppressed spirits. When I had brought Mr. Ayscough to a proper frame of mind, I took my leave, and returned to the Wood; where I related the extraordinary event that had just occurred. My mother and Sir James both rejoiced at this fortunate discovery; and, in the afternoon, paid the good man a visit to congratulate him on it. Sir James proposed we should attend him to town; which offer he accepted

with pleasure; therefore, my dear Mrs. Freemer, I shall soon have an opportunity of personally expressing my happiness to Miss Belville on her restoration to us. Heaven avert what you dread! my Louisa, an injury to our Adeline's health from this vile affair. I am shocked, beyond words, at Mrs. Evelin's conduct: knowing what she did of Miss Belville's former life, to be capable of assisting her diabolical brother in such an undertaking, proves her more depraved, if that is possible, than he is. Adieu: present to Adeline my sincere love; and accept the same yourself, from your affectionate

HARRIET THOMPSON.

H 4 Lady

Lady THOMPSON to Mrs. ABINTON.

Harley-street.

WE arrived last night, my dear madam, safe in town, though too late to see Miss Belville; to whom we went this morning, as every one was impatient to behold her. Besides the family, Lord Arundel and Sir Edward were with her. She looked pale and indifferent, though very lovely. The moment she saw us, she ran towards me: I met her with expanded arms, nor could I restrain my tears, that trickled down my cheeks in great abundance. She observed my emotion; and, taking her handkerchief from her pocket, wiped my eyes. "Nay, weep not, my Harriet, said she; it is now all over." She then turned to Sir James and Mr. Ayscough, who both embraced her; the latter was much affected: she congratulated him on the discovery of his daughter with the utmost sweetness; and taking the copy of a letter from her pocket-book gave it him, saying, "that, sir, is what I wrote to the amiable Miss Ayscough, whom I hope shortly to present to you." She turned round to give him an opportunity of reading the letter, and introduced me to the Countess de Clairville, who is a most engaging woman: she idolizes

Miss

Miss Belville, and indeed so does all the family. I whispered Mrs. Freemer, I thought Adeline looked poorly: she overheard me, and, smiling, replied, "why yes, Lady Thompson, I do not look very well; but I am so, I assure you, though the affection of my friends makes them think otherwise. My spirits have been something affected, yet they are now recovered. I should be ashamed of myself to suffer a trifle like this to hurt my health, when I have supported such a superior calamity. No, believe me, I shall be perfectly well, when I get to Belville-park, where you have promised to go, my dear sir," continued she to Mr. Somners. "I have, my love, answered he, and shall rejoice to attend you." Mr. Ayscough, who had finished the letter, advanced towards her: "You have done just as I wished you, my amiable Miss Belville, said he; that letter will not fail to prepare the unhappy girl to behold her father. But your gratitude, madam, leads you too far in respect to the annuity; a much less would have been sufficient for my heart-broken Emilia." "Say not so, sir, cried Miss Belville, interrupting him: I owe to your daughter more than I can ever pay. Speak not then of the trifle there named as an equivalent. I shall ever regard Miss Ayscough as my preserver from a misfortune worse than death." "Ah, sir, said

Mr. Somners, she has preserved us all from madness. Had the vile Sir Harry accomplished his damned intentions, this matchless woman must have been wretched, linked to such a villain! nor should I have ever known a peaceful moment. Was I to meet him, I believe his death or mine would be the consequence."

Sir Edward Wilmott declared, he should answer with his life for the insult he had offered Adeline. Lord Arundel was more moderate, but equally determined.

I saw how much their conduct distressed Miss Belville, and was concerned for her: She advanced to Sir Edward, and took him by the arm; "Do you wish my death?" said she, with infinite emotion. "Heavens, Adeline! answered he, why that question?" "Surely, if you wished to make me easy, Sir Edward, replied she, you would not talk thus. Ill as Sir Harry Evelin has behaved to me, I forgive him from my soul: he will have crimes enough to answer for; and may this be forgiven him by his Maker, as it is by me. You, Sir Edward, nor Lord Arundel, have no right to revenge yourselves upon a man who has not injured you. The injury was intended to my peace: it pleased heaven to disappoint him; and there let it rest. I again repeat, I both forgive and wish him well: nor would I in the least degree hurt either
his

his person or fortune. Therefore, if you prize my happiness, you will not hazard your lives in a quarrel."

"You know, Miss Belville, answered Sir Edward, both Lord Arundel and I would not hesitate to sacrifice every thing that concerns ourselves, in consideration of your peace. But in a case like this, it would be worse than cowardice to be passive. In this instance I must disobey you; though to satisfy you, I engage not to seek Sir Harry: but when chance brings him in my way, I will oblige him to answer for his infamous behaviour." "I will engage the same, madam, said the Earl; but my honour will not suffer me to promise further."

She then separately applied to every person to plead for her with these gentlemen, saying, she saw her influence was very trifling. This observation seemed to pain them, though they still retained their settled purpose of calling Sir Harry to an account.

Mrs. Fremer and I pleaded every argument we could against it. We were joined by the worthy Mr. Ayscough; the other gentlemen were silent: he observed, though he had private reasons that in the opinion of many might excuse his wishing revenge; yet he hoped he was not so little of a Christian, as to listen to the dictates of resentment. "No, continued he,

wip-

wiping his eyes, all the ill I wish Sir Harry for having brought misery on my family, and infamy on my child, is repentance; that he may in a degree atone to his Creator for the crimes he has been guilty of."

Adeline thanked him for the assistance he had given her; and turning to the gentlemen, continued, "can you, my Lord, and Sir Edward, who are both men that are not ashamed to acknowledge you have a conscientious idea of religion, find a single argument in vindication of your purpose, after what Mr. Ayscough has said? He has received the most cutting injury from Sir Harry; yet he forgives, and does not wish for vengeance: how then can you cruelly determine to imbrue your hands in the blood of a man who never, in the smallest instance, offended you? Indulge not these false and erroneous ideas of honour; but suffer your reason and religion to get the better of a cruel and detestable custom. I have reason enough to deplore its fatal influence; it robbed me of happiness, and Grenville of his life. You know, Sir Edward, I have suffered much already; and I do assure you, upon my honour, was either you or Lord Arundel to fall by the hand of Sir Harry Evelin, or he by your's, it would materially embitter the remaining days of my life." She arose and walked to the window. The tears stood trembling in her lovely

lovely eyes. The Earl and Sir Edward followed her, and assured her on their honour they would not take a step in the affair without her concurrence.

"Then I am satisfied, said she with eagerness: you have taken a weight from my heart that was oppressed with apprehension for your safety." They were both much affected with the manner in which she spoke, and kissed her hands with great emotion.

She returned to her seat with looks of satisfaction: the Countess came and sat down by her. "Amiable Miss Belville, said she, I cannot find words to convey to you my admiration of your conduct." "Your Ladyship is very obliging, replied she with a smile: I have taken up your time with a very disagreeable topic, as well as your's, Sir James, and my dear Lady Thompson's." "Nothing you say, Adeline, interrupted Mr. Somners, can be disagreeable to any person. I, like my sister, admire and applaud your exalted sentiments more than I can express." "You were ever partially kind, my dear sir, answered she, even to my failings: that partiality has been a comfort to me from infancy." He arose and took her hand with parental fondness. "Matchless girl, said he, was your excellent father alive, how would he glory in his Adeline!"

Ah,

Ah, my dear madam! you cannot imagine how very affecting this scene was; not a person in the room was unmoved: Miss Belville wiped a tear that trickled down her cheek at the mention of her regretted parent; and went to Mr. Aylcough, whom she talked to for near an hour.

I took the opportunity of enquiring whether they had heard any thing of Sir Harry: they said they had not. Sir Edward told me he thought he was out of England, as he had made very particular inquiries after him, and he was no where to be found. His brother and sister are either ignorant, or will not discover where he is. Well may he conceal himself after such an action! I fear Miss Belville will not soon recover herself, though she makes very light of it: Mrs. Freemer says, she eats little, and her rest is much broken. Heaven grant it may not materially impair her health, and I shall be happy.

We passed the evening in Gosvenor-square, and returned not home till late. As our stay will not be long, we shall see them every day. I hope soon to inform you Miss Aylcough is restored to her father, and in a way to be as happy as her situation will admit of. All the parent is awoken in his soul. She will not meet one reproach from him. He rejoices in her penitence, and once more looks forward for peace and comfort in the society of his Emilia. I hope it will
please

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please heaven to spare her to him; though Miss Belville tells me she is in a very bad state of health, and has been so for many years. I enclose Adeline's letter to her; I doubt not it will meet your approbation. Her heart is the best that ever beat; never I believe existed a more perfect character than her. She begs me to present her kindest respects to you, and thanks for your congratulations.

Adieu, my dear madam. Mr. Ayscough desires to be remembered to you. Sir James joins in duty. Your very sincerely affectionate

HARRIET THOMPSON.

P. S. Forget not our kindest regards at Ashley-park. Tell my aunt Betty I have executed her commission, and purchased a very fine mackaw, which I will have conveyed to her with the utmost care.

Miss

*Miss BELVILLE to Miss AYSCOUGH;
enclosed in the preceding.*

Grosvenor-square.

“ In what words shall I address my kind deliverer? how express my gratitude for the obligations you have conferred upon me? Your humanity, madam, has preserved a woman, that has all her life been the sport of fortune, from a misery that is not to be described: the baseness of Sir Harry Evelin’s designs, but for you, would in all probability have been crowned with success. How then shall I be able to return in the smallest degree what you have done for me? I know I never can make a recompence adequate to your generosity, in running such hazards to benefit a stranger, from motives of mere humanity: yet what I can do, suffer me to make acceptable to you. Believe me, Miss Ayscough, I never should regard a woman as less amiable, who by the machinations of a villain has forfeited her chastity. A deviation from virtue in one instance, does not always contaminate the mind; that sometimes retains its native whiteness; and all the nobler feelings of the soul may as conspicuously shine forth in such a one, as she who never has been drawn astray.

You,

You, madam, feel your situation with acuteness, and have long felt it. Dependent on your vile betrayer, you were obliged to bear his insults, to preserve your innocent and helpless children from penury. It has pleased heaven to distinguish me with a very large fortune; allow me then the happiness of extricating a woman, who does honour to her sex, from the power of a cruel and depraved man.

I send, enclosed, a deed which entitles you and your children after you, to an annuity of eight hundred a year. This income will effectually relieve you from a state of dependence, and will not be the smallest inconvenience to me. I have much more than I want; shall I not then spare a small portion of that abundance to you, whose generosity has preserved me from misery?

Think not I mean this trifle as a return equal to the obligation you have conferred on me; I know it is not; nor shall I ever return enough to satisfy myself.

If you are capable of travelling, which I hope you are, I will send my chariot and servants to convey you to London. I would come to Fairy-hill, but my spirits are too bad to suffer my entrance into a house of Sir Harry Evelin's; or believe me nothing should prevent my personally attending you. I have many reasons to wish you would comply with my request: one of them

them particularly concerns yourself. Prepare your heart for a surprize, my dear Miss Ayscough, and I flatter myself, a very agreeable one. Providence never entirely forsakes those who have a firm reliance on its protection. Your tears and contrition have, I trust, atoned for the error you was drawn in to commit: and I hope the remainder of your days will be peaceful and happy. We sometimes labour under the heavy pressure of woe for a series of years, in order to wean us from the too fondly beloved enjoyments of life: but if our misfortunes are endured with a proper submission to Heaven, they sometimes are of real advantage to us. I flatter myself your days of sorrow are past, and all to come will be unclouded and serene. I talk enigmatically, but till I see you I must not entirely explain myself. Once more I intreat you to prepare your heart for the sight of one infinitely dear to you.

I shall wait impatiently till I have your permission to send the carriage. In the mean time I am, with the utmost sense of your goodness, your ever gratefully obliged

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Lady

Lady THOMPSON to Mrs. ABINTON.

Harley-street.

AT length, madam, I have been witness to Mr. Ayscough's affecting interview with his daughter. Yesterday Miss Belville sent word she expected her in the afternoon, and begged we would all come to dinner in Grosvenor-square; accordingly we went. An animating glow of joy lighted up the fair face of Adeline, at the thought of Mr. Ayscough's happiness.

When we heard the carriage stop at the door, Mrs. Fremer and Miss Belville went into another apartment, to receive Miss Ayscough, while I endeavoured to keep up the spirits of her father. As they were but in the next room, we could distinguish what they said. I heard the voice of Adeline welcoming her guest, and expressing her gratitude in the most engaging manner.

" Ah, madam, answered Miss Ayscough, you have largely overpaid the trifling services I rendered you; but for your bounty I must still have lived the slave and dependant of Sir Harry. You have generously delivered both me and these poor boys from the worst of tyranny: they will thank you

you with artless innocence for what you have done for their mother."

I heard the children thank her for saving their mama; and feared this tender distress would be too much for Adeline: by her voice I discovered she was weeping. "For heaven's sake, my dear Miss Ayscough, said she, compose yourself. I have not done any thing in comparison to what you did for me. I cannot bear the thanks of your children." She stopped, unable to proceed.

Mrs. Freemer then spoke, and endeavoured to calm the emotions of both, particularly Miss Ayscough; she intreated her to compose herself, and prepare for the sight of a person very dear to her. "Ah, madam, replied she, keep me no longer in suspense: is it not my father that I am to see?" "Could you support such an interview?" said Miss Belville. "I think I could, madam, returned she, with a faint voice; though I could not bear his anger."

"You have nothing to fear, my child, cried Mr. Ayscough, from that," unable longer to contain himself. He threw open the door, and was presently before his daughter, who sunk back lifeless in the arms of Miss Belville. I cannot describe to you the distraction of her father, while she remained insensible. At length she opened her eyes, and throwing herself at his feet,
intreated

intreated his pardon. He was quite overcome by this sight, and had hardly power to speak. With difficulty he made her rise. He assured her in the tenderest manner, her penitence had entirely restored her to his affections, and she was as dear to him now as ever. "Yes, my poor Emilia, continued he, thy sufferings have expiated thy offence; you need not fear a single reproach from me." "Ah, sir, answered she, (the tears streaming down her face) I have not deserved this goodness. Had I but listened to the precepts you taught my youth, I had not been the cause of misery to you, nor have brought my beloved mother to the grave with sorrow." This reflection was too much for her, and I feared she would have again fainted. Mr. Aycough begged her to think no more of what was past, but look forward to some degree of comfort. "Alas, sir, replied she, there is no comfort for such a guilty wretch as I am." "Talk not so, my dear Emilia, said the gentle Miss Belville; your penitence will, I hope, make you at peace with heaven and your own heart. You are entirely out of the power of Sir Harry, and have nothing to do, but take care of your health, and live to comfort your excellent father."

In vain they all used arguments to reconcile her to herself; she was oppressed with a conscious sensation of her former conduct, and bowed her head

head to the earth like a rose cropt in the bloom: Mr. Ayscough looked round for her children, who stood crying. Miss Belville saw what he wanted, and led them to him: "Receive from my hand, my dear sir, said she, these valuable presents; they will soften life's decline, and, with their amiable mother, be a source of real comfort to you." He embraced and blessed them; then leading them to his daughter, whose cheeks were covered with blushes, "My dear boys, said he, you must plead with your beloved mother not to make us unhappy, but try to live for thy sakes, and the sake of her poor father, who still loves her with the same fondness he experienced for her in the state of prattling infancy." The two children hung about her, and begged she would not cry. She kept her eyes fixed on the ground, as if not daring to lift them up:

"Alas, Emilia, said Mr. Ayscough, can you resist those powerful pleaders? surely you will live for your helpless children." She looked on them both with unutterable anguish, the big tears chasing one another down her pallid cheek; at length, overcome with their moving tenderness, she folded them alternately in her arms: "Yes, my poor Harry, said she, for thee I will live; and thou, my little Frederick, shall not be deserted; though thy cruel father may abandon thee, yet will not I."

Mr.

Mr. Ayscough was deeply affected, and indeed so was every one present. After some time we became a little calmer, and several schemes were proposed by Adeline to Miss Ayscough and her father, for the place of their residence: at last it was concluded that they should live in a house that belongs to Sir James, near his country seat. My dear Thompson has wrote to have it prepared for their reception; though Mr. Ayscough means to take his daughter down to his solitary cottage, before they go to their new habitation:

Miss Belville made the children of Emilia many valuable presents which she had bought for them; they are already very fond of her. She would not suffer Miss Ayscough to leave Grosvenor Square 'till she does London, which will be in a few days. I am convinced you will esteem the unfortunate Emilia; for she is, really, a very amiable and accomplished woman.

Soon after we leave London, Mr. Somners's family sets off for Belville Park; my dear Adeline appears pleased at the prospect of this journey, and says, she hopes to be a little at peace there; the Earl and Sir Edward attend her down at her own particular request, as she told me she feared they might meet Sir Harry if they staid in town; he has not yet been heard of; Mrs. Evelin has sent to enquire after Adeline's health; and was extremely sorry to hear she was so indifferent.

ferent. What amazing confidence! surely; there was never any thing equal to this woman! I hope her vile brother is gone out of the kingdom; every thing is to be dreaded from his daring disposition. The absence of Miss Belville was so short it is not at all talked of; and I believe, except our own friends, nobody knows of it; the knowledge of this keeps up her spirits very much; and, I flatter myself, change of air, and her mind at peace, will intirely restore her health. She has settled a considerable sum on Harris and his mother; her gratitude to those concerned in her escape is unbounded. Heaven grant the residue of her life may not be clouded with any material troubles, she has suffered enough already. Adieu, my dear madam, the love and respects of all the family, in Grosvenor Square, wait on you, with the dutiful affection of Sir James, and your

HARRIET THOMPSON.

Mrs.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Grosvenor-Square.

ALAS! my dear Harriet, when will the troubles of our Adeline end? she has received a letter from Captain Montague, an intimate of the vile Sir Harry's, to inform her of his sudden death, which happened at a village not far distant from Dover; he was seized with a violent fever, which carried him off in a few days; while he was sensible, he intreated Captain Montague to write to Miss Belville, after his decease, and tell her, he was, when too late, sensible of the baseness of his conduct; that he begged, with almost his dying breath, her forgiveness; and hoped her hate would not pursue him into another world. He concluded Sir Harry's message to her by informing her, the girl she formerly relieved; at the cottage, was one whom he seduced; and, on discovering she was protected by Adeline, he had persuaded her to go to a house of his, called Rushbrook Castle, where she now is; soon after he had revealed this circumstance, he lost his senses, and died in a state of distraction. Montague finishes his letter with saying, as he had

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been,

been, all along, the confident of Sir Harry's designs against Miss Belville, he cannot bear to stay in England; and was setting off for France at the time he dispatched this intelligence.

I cannot express to you, how much the sudden death of Sir Harry Evelin shocked my friend; she has been very ill ever since the receipt of this letter; and, I fear, will not soon recover the dejection this circumstance has occasioned. I find Sir Harry wrote to his brother, when first he was taken ill, desiring him to have some compassion on Miss Ayscough and his children; he has died very much involved. The title, and family estate, descends to Mr. Evelin, now Sir William. The new Lady Evelin was here yesterday; and would take no denial, but insisted on speaking with Miss Belville, who was greatly flurried at the sight of her: she addressed her with much affection; expressed her concern, that her brother could be capable of such a step; and assured her, she was perfectly unconcerned in it, so was Mr. Evelin. "As to the latter, madam, answered Adeline, I really believe it; though I have a letter, in my pocket-book, that rather contradicts what you say concerning your own innocence; she took it out; and gave it her, it is wrote with Sir Harry's own hand, you see, madam." "It is, my dear," replied she, with emotion; while she was reading it her colour changed, and she

was

was in the utmost confusion. Adeline was pained at her embarrassment, and generously endeavoured to relieve it. "I would impute your concurrence, madam, said she, to such a base scheme, merely to your affection for Sir Harry; though I should have thought, no regard, how great soever, would have led a good mind such lengths; I would not pain you, madam, by reproaches, though you would have heaped so much anguish on me; from my heart, I forgive you, as I did, long ago, your brother; may the Almighty have forgiven him likewise! Indeed, he has been a bad man to more than one unhappy female; but he is gone, and let his faults be forgot;" she stopped, and wiped her eyes. Lady Evelin was infinitely distressed; "I have not merited your forgiveness, Miss Belville, said she, with great emotion, yet, I hope you will not shew that letter to my husband, it would make continual disagreements between us. I do assure you, upon my honour, he was intirely ignorant of his brother's proceedings; though I was unfortunately drawn in to promise my assistance to so diabolical a plan, you need not wish me a greater punishment than my own reflections; indeed you need not, Adeline, they will be acute enough;" she wiped her eyes and was silent. My beloved friend promised to destroy the letter, assured her again of her forgiveness, and, as a

mark of it, engaged sometimes to see her. She took her leave with expressions of the deepest contrition for what had happened. Ah! Lady Thompson, what an excellent heart has Miss Belville! I tremble for her health, it is greatly impaired; if the native air of Belville Park does not restore her, I fear we shall have her loss to lament; the idea distracts me, Heaven avert so great a misfortune! Mrs. Duncannon, the Colonel, and Mrs. Medway, have been several times to see her, they are shocked at the alteration in her; Charlotte has promised to spend some days with her at the end of the summer; at present, they are all going to Sir William's. We leave London the day after to-morrow; I am impatient to get my Adeline out of town; you shall hear from me soon, and I hope to give you a better account of our amiable friend. Adieu, my dear Harriet, we all unite in respects to you, your mother, Sir James, Mr. Ayscough, and his daughter. I hope poor Emilia will quickly recover; Miss Belville begs you will present her best love to her; and accept the same yourself, with that of your ever affectionate

LOUISA FREEMER.

P. S. Adeline has wrote to the unfortunate Miss Smyth, and again offers her protection and assistance, if she will accept of it.

Mrs. FREEMER to Lady THOMPSON.

Belville-Park.

THOUGH we have been here a fortnight, I have not had any opportunity of writing to my dear Lady Thompson 'till now: it is with the utmost pleasure, I assure you, the health of our beloved Adeline is intirely restored; her spirits are still low, though I hope much from time and the unwearied endeavours of her friends. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward came down with us, and are continually finding out new plans that may amuse and entertain her; Miss Belville is fully sensible of their desire to oblige her, and exerts herself to be grateful.

Her appearance at the Park has set the whole village rejoicing; they rung the bells, and gave every token of pleasure, the moment she was known to be near her own house. She has been almost to every farm and cottage herself; and, at each, left some memorial of her bounty; never was any body so adored. The Countess grows, every day, more fond of her; and often tells me, she is the most perfect character she read of.

I was a good deal shocked at a circumstance that happened this morning, as it was an entire surprize to me: I generally rise early, in the country, and take a walk before the rest of the family are up: I did so to-day; and going down into the Park, I perceived Adeline, about a hundred yards before me, walking very fast; I followed her into the church-yard, which is not far from the upper end of the Park, she stopped at the family vault; and, taking a key from her pocket, opened the door, and closed it after her; this strange sight had such an effect on my spirits, that, had I not leaned against a tree, I should have certainly fallen down; in about half an hour she came up again, locked the door, and put the key in her pocket; I observed she wiped her eyes frequently; and appeared to endeavour to suppress the emotions which preyed on her peace. I followed her, unobserved, into the Park; and, walking round some trees, met her; she blushed a little on seeing me, but asked how I did; I likewise enquired after her health, and begged to know what she had been in the vault for? "To contemplate the coffin of my Grenville," said she, smiling. "Alas, Adeline, answered I, why do you indulge yourself in so melancholy an employment? let me intreat you never to go again; you cannot imagine what I suffered while you was there." "I am sorry, my

my dear Mrs. Freemer, replied she, that I frightened you; though, believe me, that melancholy employment, as you call it, is my greatest delight and recreation; I never have omitted it since I have been at Belville Park; nor can I resign this pensive satisfaction without infinite pain; it does not increase my grief for the loss of Augustus, but relieves my spirits; when I have contemplated the silence and solemnity of these last mansions of mortality, I find my thoughts lifted above the world, and I feel my sorrows less; therefore, my beloved Louisa, do not seek to deprive me of this satisfaction: the melancholy pleasure of contemplating the tomb of my Augustus, has, for a great while, been my comfort; nor can I resign it without infinite regret."

As I found she made such a point of it, I said no more against it, at that time, but changed the subject. We sat down on a seat, under the shade of a large tree, and began talking of former events. "What a strange life has mine been! Louisa, said my friend; how full of trouble and vexation! first, I lost my father, then Mr. Grenville; from that unhappy period, how fast has misfortunes crowded on each other! the cruel conduct of Sir Harry, is far from the least I have experienced; however, he is gone, and I will think no more of that;" she wiped her eyes,

and continued : “ reflect, Louisa, that, a few short years ago, the amiable Grenville fought with his brother, about the larks, on this very spot ; and now he lies entomb’d in yonder vault.” “ Think not of that now, my beloved Adeline, said I, interrupting her, you will hurt yourself by this retrospect of what is past ;” “ ah ! no, Louisa, answered she, I only give words to my thoughts that are continually employed on his virtues, and the untimely period they met ; I shall not impair my health by the meditation. I hope I am not impatient, but whenever it shall please Heaven to call me, I shall lie, contented, down by Grenville in the silent grave ; it is true, I have many comforts left ; but of them I may be deprived in a moment. This world is a vapour : what, then, is all it contains ? like a morning dream is the happiness of mortals, that passes away at the presence of the sun ! but, forgive me, I see I distress you ; we will talk no more of this subject.” I was prevented answering by the sudden appearance of Sir Edward, who was come to seek us ; he saw we had been weeping, but did not notice our emotion ; we returned with him to the house, where Adeline appeared in her usual serenity. Ah ! my Harriet, the more I see of this matchless woman, the more I am amazed ; her steadiness of soul excites my admiration, as much as her pious temper does my love. Adieu :

my

my Adeline joins me in tenderest love to your family and Mr. Ayscough's. Captain Freemer, the Countess, my Father, Lord Arundel, and Sir Edward, desires to be remembered to you; and that you will accept their best wishes, with those of your ever affectionate

LOUISA FREEMER.

Miss BELVILLE to Lady THOMPSON.

Belville-park.

TO ease the solicitude of my Harriet, I set down to assure her I am in perfect health, though not intirely so in spirits: I hope soon to recover my usual tranquillity, and be no more the cause of uneasiness to my friends. This scene of my youth, and past happiness, makes me rather melancholy, joined to the sudden death of Sir Harry Evelin. I confess, Lady Thompson, I never was more shocked than when that intelligence first reached me. His last agonies, as described by Captain Montague, gave severe pangs to my heart: I hope his struggles are now all over, and he will find lasting peace. It seems, by his letter to Mr. Evelin, he was very desirous of finding out the person who had aided my escape; and he declared, if he could once be revenged on him, as he supposed it must have been a man, he should be intirely satisfied. Alas! my Harriet, what a shocking thing that, at the closing minute of his life, he should cherish thoughts of revenge! I shudder to think what a terrible character he was! he entertained not the least suspi-

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cion of Miss Ayfcough's being concerned; on the contrary, he recommended her to the compassion of his brother. Thank Heaven, she needs not the assistance of any one! My Louisa has informed you he was the seducer of that unhappy woman who disappeared so suddenly from the cottage.

I have received a letter from the poor girl, filled with a thousand expressions of gratitude for my offered protection; and, at last, I hope she will be happy; I have, likewise, received a letter from Lord Bromfield: telling me, if it is agreeable, he will spend a few days with me very soon. I sent him a pressing invitation, and therefore expect him shortly. The Colonel and Mrs. Medway are likewise coming; Charlotte wrote word to Mrs. Fremer, she could not be easy where she was, on my account, as she knew I wanted some one to keep up my spirits; and, therefore, for once, she had persuaded George to change his quarters; and, in a few days, they would beat their march for Belville Park. She still retains her gaiety; and, in her society, I dare say, I shall again be chearful. Indeed, I rather think, we want some one to animate us all; for none of the present inhabitants of Belville-house are very lively. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward watch my looks with the most anxious solicitude, and, intirely, take
their

their humour from mine ; which, on that account, I endeavour should appear chearful and happy ; every kind office, in their power, they do me ; and, under the name of friendship, appears the most extravagant love. I am sorry to see their attachment increase, as it only augments their unhappiness. Ah ! my Harriet, that I could bid the tumults of love cease ! and only the calm sensations of friendship remain ; but I know it is impossible ; that powerful passion is never to be conquered. I wish for the arrival of Mrs. Medway, for their sakes, and the rest of my beloved friends ; her gaiety will banish the seriousness that now appears on every countenance ; Lord Bromfield, too, will be benefited by her society ; he yet labours under the heavy pressure of his woe, and cannot shake it off ; it shall be my endeavour to make it as light as possible ; I will conceal the anguish of my own heart, to lessen his : I hope Heaven will assist me ! and I shall restore him to peace. Thus, my Harriet, will your Adeline be blessed with another amiable circle of friends at this place of her nativity ; and while she looks back, with a sigh, to those days which are gone, she will raise her tearful eyes in gratitude to Heaven, for the comforts that yet remain ; and though my heart must ever retain the deepest sense of what it lost, yet, I flatter myself I shall not, by an obstinate adherence to melan-

melancholy, offend the power who has given me so many blessings, in return for those he took away. Perhaps, when I contemplate the happiness of Fremer and Louisa, I may cast my eyes to the spot where Grenville sleeps, and think, such might have been ours. Adieu, my Harriet, on this topic I will write no more.

Ever yours,

ADELINE BELVILLE.

Mrs.

Mrs. MEDWAY to Mrs. DUNCANNON.

Belville-park.

AS usual, I must begin my letter with begging your excuse for my neglect: with more confidence I can do it now, than formerly; as I know my beloved mother will be satisfied to hear my whole time has been devoted to Miss Belville; whom, I have the pleasure to tell you, appears much better, both in health and spirits, than when I first came; the beautiful glow of youth, which used to create such universal admiration, again returns; her countenance resumes its heavenly sweetness; and she, once more, appears in perfect beauty. The joy of the whole family, at this agreeable alteration, is not to be described. Lord Arundel and Sir Edward, as they are both passionately fond of Adeline, are loudest in expressing their happiness; the lovely cause of their joy thanks them for their solicitude, on her account, with all the sweetness of perfect gratitude. How Miss Belville can preserve her temper so unshaken, amidst the adoration of multitudes, I know not; but she is more than woman. Her exquisite generosity has engaged the love and admiration of the whole county. When she

she appears at church, a murmur of applause runs through the humble congregation; and each, by his devotion and proper demeanor at the sacred place, strives to recommend himself to her notice; nor is the endeavour of the meanest disregarded; to all, as she passes from her pew, she speaks; particularly to those whose years and honesty intitle them to respect; when she opens her mouth, the villagers croud round her; and her words are esteemed as an oracle; yet, for all this, she is still humble, and never thinks she can do good enough. Ah! madam, never lived a character more truly exemplary! yet, alas! how severely has she suffered! In coming out of church, I observed she looked on the vault that contains her Augustus; the tears trembled in her lovely eyes, but she said nothing; for my own part, the look she cast was so truly expressive of the inward woe she felt, that I was obliged to hurry on, or I should have betrayed my feelings by my tears. When we came home, a letter, from Lord Bromfield, was delivered to Adeline, to inform her, he was a few miles from the Park; and, if she would permit him, he would wait on her in an hour; but he dared not approach without apprizing her of it. He concluded with declaring, he needed every consolation and encouragement from her on entering a house that his folly and vice had made a scene of misery

misery to the best of her sex ; she instantly wrote an answer, full of the kindest expressions and intreaties, for his immediate presence. Accordingly, a little before dinner, he came ; Adeline ran towards him, he clasped her in his arms in silent agony ; then, throwing himself on a sofa, seemed lost in grief ; Miss Belville seated herself by him, and, taking his hand, in the mildest accents, begged him to be comforted, the tears, at the same time, streaming down her face. “ Ah ! Adeline, said he, dear, angelick girl ! I never can know comfort ; am I not the cause of these tears ? the anguish of thy heart was planted all by me ; my folly destroyed Grenville ; not only robbed him of life, but of the greatest blessing that indulgent Heaven could bestow on man, my conduct sever’d from his arms.” “ Let me intreat you to be more composed, my Lord, interrupted Mr. Somners, for Heaven’s sake, do not tear open the wounds that are hardly healed ; oppress not Adeline by your sorrow ; her health is but just restored, violent conflicts may again endanger it ; too much, already, she inclines to earth ; it should be the endeavour of her friends to raise her ; and not add new sorrow to a heart borne down with anguish. “ ’Tis true, answered he, henceforth, I will confine my feelings to my own breast ; and, continued he, turning to Adeline, forgive the transports of grief which
I could

I could not check on entering a house where I had formerly known so much happiness." She could not answer, but held out her hand, which he passionately pressed to his lips. After this we became more tranquil; and, in a few days, both Lord Bromfield and Miss Belville appeared to have recovered their serenity; they frequently walk alone, for hours, in the Park; and, I am in great hopes, time will do much for both. I would gladly accept my sister's invitation; but Miss Belville expresses so much concern whenever I talk of leaving her, that I know not when I shall have resolution to do it; therefore, by way of consolation for my absence, I will write as I have opportunity; at present, I must take my leave. The whole family join, in most affectionate respects, with the Colonel, and your faithfully sincere

CHARLOTTE MEDWAY.

*The Right Hon. the Earl of BROMFIELD to his
Grace the Duke of MONTAGUE.*

Belville-park.

IN compliance with the promise I made your Grace, at parting, I take up my pen to inform you, the health of Miss Belville is now intirely restored; would I could say her mind was as much at ease! but, alas! the wounds of that will never be cured! happiness is fled for ever from her; in the tomb of Grenville, every joy lies buried; yet never does the lovely sufferer permit her feelings to express themselves in words: sometimes a melancholy gloom steals over her features, and the unbidden tears dim her bright eyes when she contemplates the picture of Augustus, which is drawn at full length in the library; but, in tenderness to me, she often checks her emotions, and smiles away her tender anguish; however, in secret, she mourns her separated love, she seldom expresses the sorrow that invades her heart, even to those that live with her, and a common guest would hardly believe she was unhappy; by this command over her feelings she makes the family easy; not a
person

person in it but idolizes her ; nay, not her own family alone, but the whole village, and miles about it, regard her as their sovereign good ; never did any woman, so young, obtain a reputation like hers.

With the most acute emotions I entered this house : I looked on myself as the man who had cruelly broke the peace of this angelic girl ; oppressed with that idea, I hardly dared to venture hither ; but, when I came, the manner she received me, and her behaviour since, has stilled the tumult of my soul ; and I now, again, hope to pass my days in tranquillity ; though a stranger to happiness, the latter I can never regain ; my charming Adeline strives to persuade me I may ; but I have that within which tells me it cannot be.

By chance, the other morning, looking over some papers of my father's, I found a letter from Mr. Frankley, who was tutor to us at the university. This letter justly delineated the characters of my brother and myself ; I read it till I could no longer combat my feelings, but flung it on the table, and walked into the Park ; soon recollecting I had left it open, I hastily returned ; and, on entering the room, perceived Miss Belville perusing the letter ; the tears of anguish fell, in large drops, upon her trembling hands ; her lovely frame seemed shook with agony, while,
from

from her bosom, burst such moving sighs, as would have melted inhumanity to pity. Your Grace will better conceive, than I describe, the sensations that agitated my breast, at this sight; I flew to her with eagerness, and, on my knees, intreated she would read no more. She looked surprized at seeing me, as she had been intirely engrossed; and, folding the letter, she laid it on the table, and, extending her hand, begged I would rise; I did so, but was unable to speak. When she had a little recovered herself, she addressed me as follows: "How blameable is it of us to mourn the death of such a man as Grenville! he was not fit for this world. He was too good for me;" she paused and wiped her eyes, then proceeded: "the more I know of his matchless character, the more am I reconciled to his loss; be you so too, my dear Lord Bromfield, cease to afflict yourself, it cannot benefit him; if any thing has been wrong, you have atoned for it; strive to be as composed as I am; when I look back on the whole tenor of his life, I know him to be a guest fit for the high mansion he now inhabits; and though the natural weakness and softness of my sex sometimes betrays me into tears, yet my reason condemns me, and tells me I do wrong."

Though I repeat her words, I cannot give you, by language, the smallest idea of her manner;
you

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you once beheld her behaviour, on a similar occasion,—when we met her so suddenly at the play ; the same tenderness, the same generosity, now animated her beautiful countenance. A thousand other instances I could recount, that would raise your present admiration, of this lady, to adoration ; but I wish not to add to your regret for her loss. As you are so very anxious about her, I will write sometimes ; but I must now take my leave, after begging my best respects, through your medium, may be made acceptable to your mother : and believe me, your Grace's
most devoted,

BROMFIELD.

T H E E N D.

